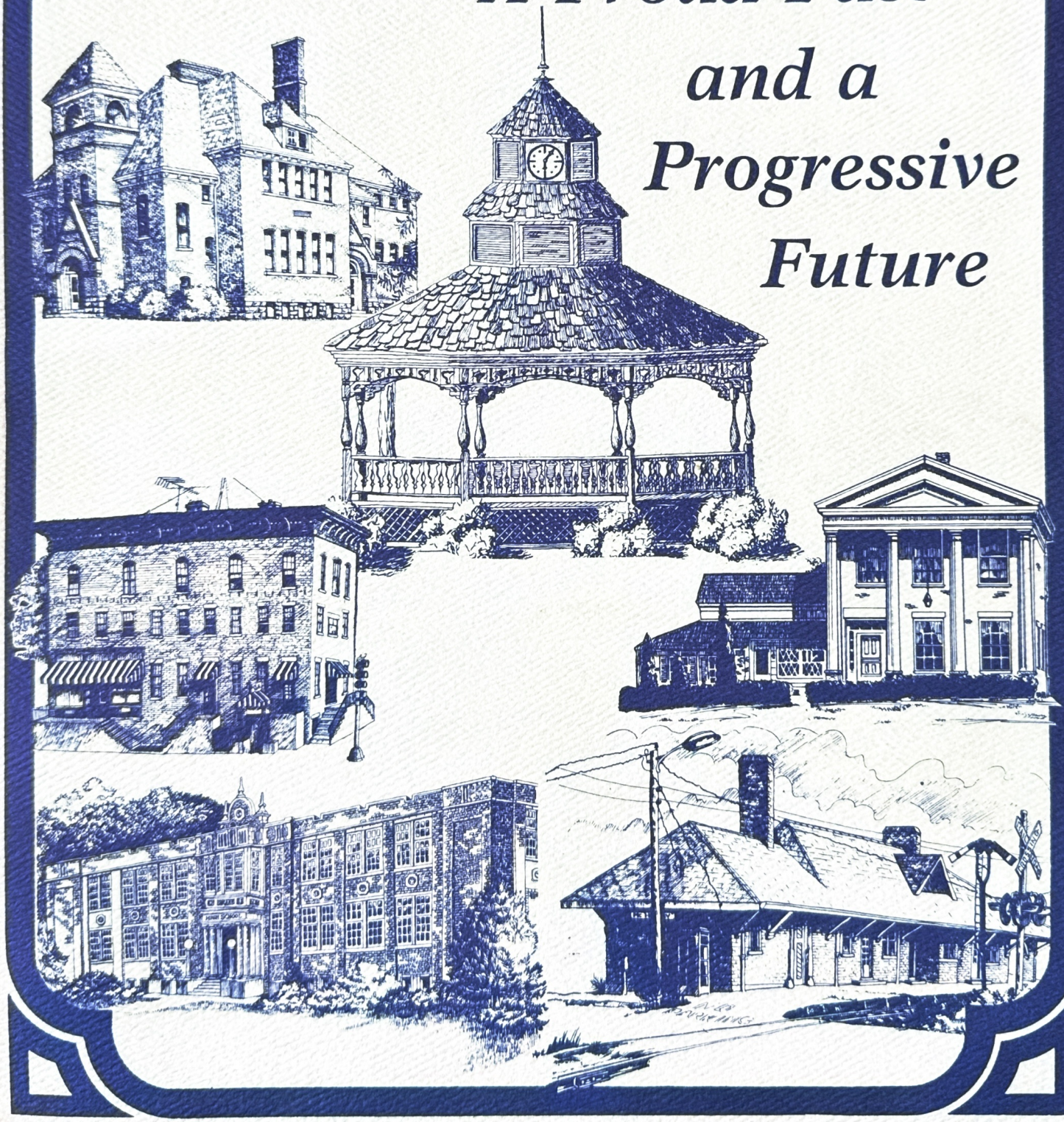
Donation $5.00

1836 – McHenry – 1986

A Proud Past and a Progressive Future

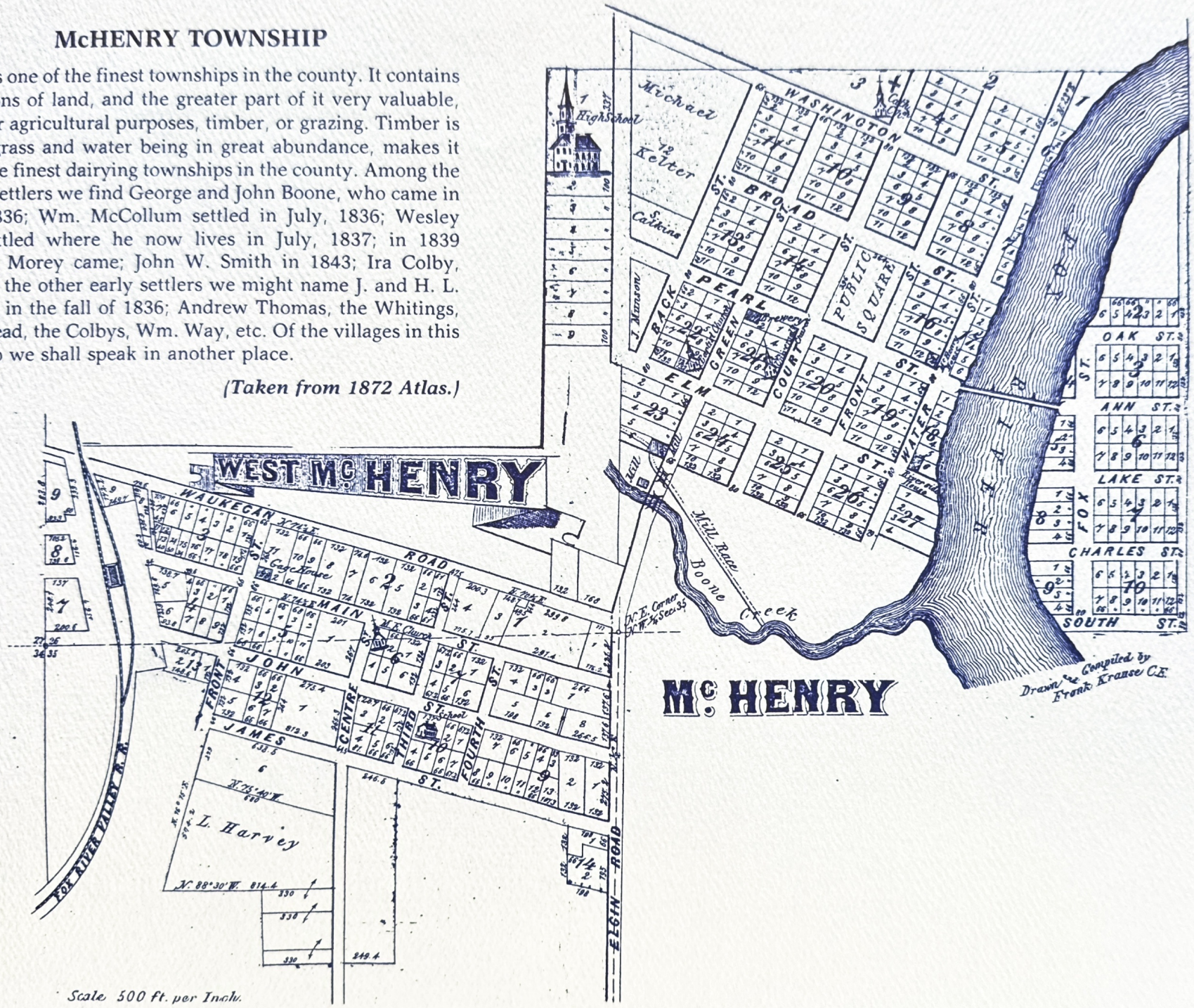


Commemorative Sesquicentennial Book

McHENRY TOWNSHIP

This is one of the finest townships in the county. It contains 48 sections of land, and the greater part of it very valuable, either for agricultural purposes, timber, or grazing. Timber is plenty; grass and water being in great abundance, makes it one of the finest dairying townships in the county. Among the earliest settlers we find George and John Boone, who came in April, 1836; Wm. McCollum settled in July, 1836; Wesley Ladd settled where he now lives in July, 1837; in 1839 Solomon Morey came; John W. Smith in 1843; Ira Colby, 1840. Of the other early settlers we might name J. and H. L. McLean, in the fall of 1836; Andrew Thomas, the Whitings, W. S. Mead, the Colbys, Wm. Way, etc. Of the villages in this township we shall speak in another place.

(Taken from 1872 Atlas.)



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FORWARD

One does not write history — for history has been written by the people who lived it. With this in mind, we have asked members of our community to share their memories about life in McHenry. We present their unvarnished recollections, and in doing so, hope you will enjoy the immense warmth and distinctive character of each of our subjects who have opened their homes to us in these past months. That our work is not without error, or that some name or interesting event has been omitted, is purely unintentional.

We invite you to pause for a while and reflect with us on how far we have come in the past 150 years and remember the accomplishments and events which have been etched into the hearts and minds of those who have called McHenry home.

It has been our intent and purpose not merely to inform but to stimulate interest in our city's past and in doing so, hopefully nuture pride in its heritage through preservation of its historic structures and other landmarks.

We gratefully acknowledge the McHenry Plaindealer for allowing us to review old issues and reprint segments here in our chronology. We have tried to pick out those items that we felt would be of interest to the majority of our community, would evoke memories for many, and have historic value 50 years from this writing when the next staff undertakes this commission.

Although the task of gathering the data has been interesting, it has also been time-consuming beyond belief. Like Nancy Fike, I too am a working mom. For this reason I would like to thank my family for accepting my shortcomings during these past months, and especially to my daughters for allowing me to be a part-time mom, so that I could devote endless hours to this book.

This has truly been a labor of love for a city we are proud to call home.

— Barbara (Krickl) Meyer

THIS SESQUICENTENNIAL BOOK was made possible through the generous sponsorship of the City of McHenry on behalf of its residents. It is to the people of McHenry, past, present and future, that this history is dedicated.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 25, 1986

To the Citizens of McHenry, Illinois:

I am pleased to send warm greetings for the 150th anniversary of McHenry.

Each city and town of our great country is unique, but all are bound together in the love of these United States. We are fortunate to live in a nation of strong and proud communities where everyone has a chance for success and the blessings of liberty and freedom can be enjoyed by all, regardless of background.

As you commemorate this anniversary, you have a splendid opportunity to renew your commitment to preserve the spirit which has forged America into a land of wonder. I am proud to join you in making such a commitment on this historic occasion for the people of McHenry.

With hearty congratulations and best wishes for continued milestones,

Ronald Reagan

STATE OF ILLINOIS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SPRINGFIELD 62706

JAMES R. THOMPSON
GOVERNOR

January, 1986

Greetings:

As Governor of Illinois, I am pleased to congratulate the citizens of McHenry on the Sesquicentennial of your city.

I commend everyone who has worked to compile information for this memorial history. It will become more and more valuable over time, and something that citizens of McHenry will cherish for generations to come.

On behalf of the more than 11 1/2 million people of Illinois, my sincere best wishes for a wonderful celebration.

Sincerely,

James R. Thompson
GOVERNOR

JRT/pm

STATE OF ILLINOIS
EIGHTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Joint Resolution No. 194

Offered by Representative Klemm

WHEREAS, McHenry, Illinois, is celebrating its sesquicentennial year in 1986; and

WHEREAS, The highlight of the year's celebration is the redevelopment of Veteran's Memorial Park, McHenry's town square, which dates back to 1837 when McHenry County was first organized, encompassing all of what is now both Lake and McHenry Counties; and

WHEREAS, On December 11, 1837, the county commissioners passed a proposal to erect a courthouse and jail on the public square, and in 1840 the wooden courthouse was built; and

WHEREAS, This year, McHenry will rename its town square Veteran's Memorial Park and will build a gazebo/bandshell for musical events, a new play area, and washrooms, and will plant over 350 new plants and shrubs; the Veteran's Memorial will be updated to commemorate those who served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Many businesses, service clubs, and individuals have contributed to this project; and

WHEREAS, McHenry has received letters of support from President Reagan and Governor Thompson; President Reagan wrote, "As you commemorate this anniversary, you have a splendid opportunity to renew your commitment to preserve the spirit which has forged America into a land of wonder. I am proud to join you in making such a commitment on this historic occasion for the people of McHenry"; and

WHEREAS, McHenry has compiled a memorial history which Governor Thompson praised as "something that citizens of McHenry will cherish for generations to come"; and

WHEREAS, According to that "History of McHenry," the present city was settled in 1836; it was named in honor of General McHenry who fought in the War of 1812 and the Black Hawk War; and

WHEREAS, With the coming of the railroad in 1854, West McHenry was born, largely through the efforts of George Gage, who secured the railroad; and

WHEREAS, After the railroad, the next major developments were the telegraph which came in 1873, and the telephone, for which the first exchange opened in 1897, under the management of Simon Stoffel; and

WHEREAS, A water-power-light plant was installed in the old Owen grist mill in 1908, gas in 1921, and a sewer system in 1923, along with paved roads; in 1936, the Mothers Club opened a public library in the Community High School, where it remains to this day, supported by public donations and the Mothers Club; and

WHEREAS, Among the earliest settlers, who arrived not long after the land passed from the hands of the Potowatomie Indians, were Henry W. and John V. McLean and William L. Way, who had heard that a new county was to be opened up, adjacent to Cook County, and who were elated at the thought of settling in unclaimed territory; soon, in the winter of '36, they were joined by 20 more people, with more soon to follow; and

WHEREAS, Some of McHenry's citizens were members of the Legislature of the State of Illinois, among them: The Hon. Henry McLean, the Hon. George Gage, the Hon. Richard Bishop, the Hon. F. K. Granger, who had the honor of presiding as the first Speaker of the House in the new State Capitol building, and Thomas A Bolger, who served, later, in 1930-34; and

WHEREAS, The first churches were established in 1837 through 1840, and the first school was held in 1840 in the north end of B. B. Brown's log cabin tavern, taught by Arminda McOmber and, later, by Reliance Brown; a public school opened in 1859; and

WHEREAS, Today, the whole town of McHenry is busily preparing the various sesquicentennial events, such as Fiesta Days with Drum Corps and parade, which will culminate in the opening of the new Veteran's Memorial Park; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we congratulate McHenry, Illinois, on its one hundred and fifty year heritage; that we commend its citizens for their staunch patriotism and their pride in their town; and that we wish McHenry as varied and eventful a next 150 years as those they just chronicled; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this preamble and resolution be presented to the Mayor of the City of McHenry with our best wishes.

Adopted by the House of Representatives on May 14, 1986.

John O'Brien — John F. O'Brien, Clerk of the House

Michael J. Madigan — Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House

Concurred in by the Senate on May 15, 1986.

Kenneth A. Wright — Kenneth A. Wright, Secretary of the Senate

Philip J. Rock — Philip J. Rock, President of the Senate

SESQUICENTENNIAL
1 · 8 · 3 · 6
1 · 9 · 8 · 6
CITY OF McHENRY
150 YEARS

CITY OF McHENRY

1111 North Green Street / McHenry, Illinois 60050

From humble beginnings on a frontier settlement one hundred fifty years ago, McHenry's roots have been firmly implanted in talented, resourceful people who have shown care and concern for family, friends and community. From our pioneer forefathers we inherited the capacity for hard work and attention to business today, while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow. Generation after generation, the people of McHenry have given freely of their time, energy, and wealth to build a hospital, churches, parks, and other vital community services.

The improvements at Veteran's Memorial Park (formerly Pearl Street Park) are symbolic of our Sesquicentennial theme. For many years until a fire claimed the structure, a wooden band shell was situated in the center of the park. Eventually, it was replaced in 1964 with another band shell, which itself is being replaced with a Victorian Era gazebo reminiscent of our earlier days.

Through donation of time, materials and monetary contributions, the renovation of the park became a community project similar to the collective spirit that built McHenry over the past one hundred fifty years. Strongly committed, the people of McHenry have always made a difference in the success of many community endeavors.

The Sesquicentennial year is not merely a reason for celebration. It is an event designed to call attention to our important heritage. Without the past, we have no perspective of the future. As time passes, future generations may be unable to recall the history of our structures, the development of our lands, and the personal contributions of many of our dedicated residents. Through the efforts of our Landmark Commission, many of our historic city structures will soon receive the recognition for the contribution made to the development of our community.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your mayor during this Sesquicentennial celebration. Over the past one hundred fifty years we truly have been blessed as a community. Through Civil War, economic collapse, and World Wars, McHenry has always grown and prospered. In this Sesquicentennial year 1986, I share with all our residents the pride in our past and the dreams and expectations for our promising future.

William J. Busse
Mayor
City of McHenry

WARD 1
William J. Bolger
Elizabeth Nolan

WARD 2
Gary W. Lieder
Michael R. Teta

WARD 3
Raymond Smith
Frank McClatchey

WARD 4
Cecilia Serritella
Gary E. Snell

SESQUICENTENNIAL BOOKLET COMMITTEE

The City of McHenry Sesquicentennial Commemorative Book was prepared and edited by the Publication Committee consisting of, left to right, Co-Editors Barbara Krickl Meyer and Nancy J. Fike. They were assisted by Sesquicentennial Co-Chairmen Adele Froehlich and Barbara Freund Gilpin. The Publication Committee wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation all those who worked on the publication as follows:

To those who generously loaned photographs: Alvan Baur; Mayme Buss; City of McHenry; Pearl Cooper; Pat Frisby; Lorraine Schaefer Gausden; Barbara Freund Gilpin; Joan Weber Kennebeck; Joanne Durland Larkin; Tom Lawson; John Licastro; McHenry County Historical Society; Northwest Herald (formerly McHenry Plaindealer); Norbert Mauch; Joseph M. Schmitt; Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church; Robert Thompson; William H. Tonyan, Jr.; Henry B. Tonyan; Leone Freund Tonyan; Mary Althoff Vycital.

To the Northwest Herald for making available microfilmed past issues of the McHenry Plaindealer for the chronology.

To those who spent many hours typing: Nancy J. Fike; Barbara Freund Gilpin; Maggie Koleno; Kathi Aherns Kunzer; Barbara Krickl Meyer; Anne Elliott Rodenkirch.

To those who took interviews: Nancy J. Fike; Adele Froehlich; Barbara Kirckl Meyer; Toni Retek.

And finally, to Steve Fike for his photography work; and to Chuck and Belle Lehman of McHenry Printing for their design and layout expertise.

SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Honorary Chairman: Earl R. Walsh
Co-Chairmen: Adele Froehlich & Barbara Gilpin

Commission Members: Phyllis Bauer, William J. Bolger, Mayor William J. Busse, Chris Cardamone, Trey Covalt, Donald Doherty, Nancy J. Fike, Susan Low, Tony Oliver, Richard Rabbitt, Neida Rechisky and Sam Zito.

McHENRY CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: William J. Busse
City Clerk: Barbara E. Gilpin
City Treasurer: Jon J. Meyer

Aldermen:
William J. Bolger, Elizabeth Nolan, Michael R. Teta, Gary W. Lieder, Raymond L. Smith, Frank McClatchey, Cecilia Serritella, Gary Snell.

The Early History of McHenry

The following History, including early settlers and organizations, is taken from the 1936 booklet commemorating the 100th birthday of McHenry. It is written from the perspective of 1936 including that era's type of speech and colloquialisms. We are proud — and fortunate — to have this recording of the earliest years. Any errors or omissions are unintentional.

City Hall on Green Street with the Terra Cotta facade c. 1916.

HISTORY OF McHENRY

(As told from the perspective of 1936.)

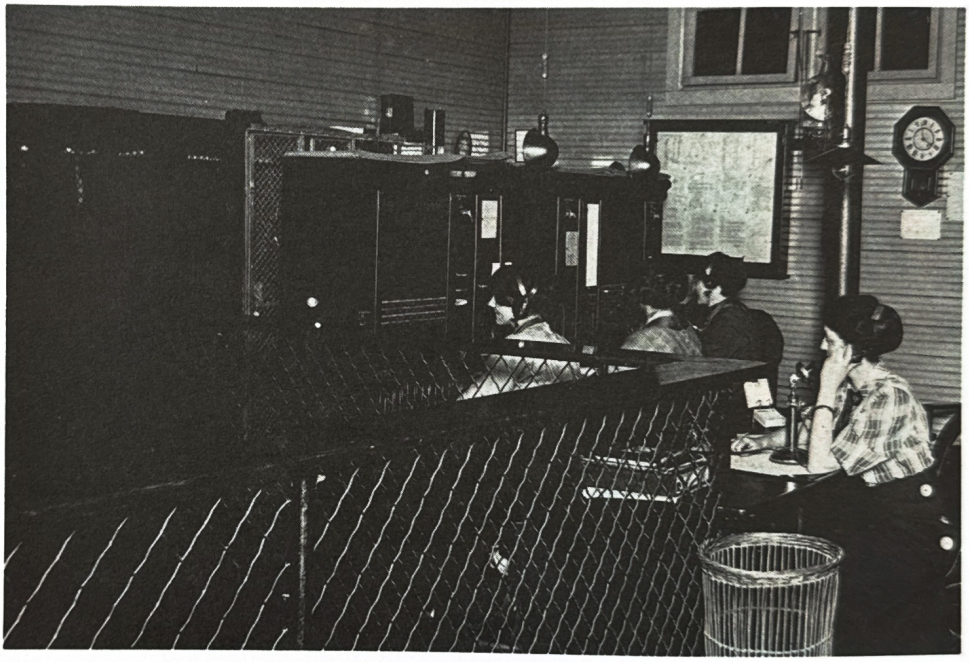
The present city of McHenry was settled in the year of 1836, then in Cook County, but during the session of 1836-37, the Legislature passed an act setting off from Cook the territory now included in McHenry and Lake counties, under the former name, which was given in honor of General McHenry who fought in the war of 1812 and the Black Hawk War. The village of McHenry was laid out in 1837 by A.S. Barnum, a Chicago surveyor, through the efforts of Henry McLean. It was the first town or village that took shape in the county. In May 1837 the county seat was located at McHenry, which had been chosen by commissioners appointed by the Legislature, — Crystal Lake, Half Day, Ft. Hill and Independence Grove (now Libertyville) competing for that honor. The first election was held in 1837, Christy Wheeler, Wm. Way and John McLean were appointed judges; H.M. Owen and B.B. Brown, clerks, and that election William H. Buck and Wm. Way were elected Justices of Peace. In 1838-39 the County of McHenry was divided into two parts, the new county being called Lake. It was thought that McHenry would continue to be the county seat but the people became dissatisfied, it being so much to one side, that the Legislature during the session of 1842-43 passed an act authorizing the people to select a new county seat. The election was held and Centerville (now Woodstock) had the majority. So in 1844, the seat of justice was removed to that place. McHenry had not built its Court House and jail on the village square until 1844, so it was used for a very short time. Later it was removed to the McHenry House.

West McHenry (formerly called Gagetown) sprang into existence upon the arrival of the railroad in 1854. George Gage owned the site of the town and was instrumental to quite an extent in securing the railroad. He and others at once saw the propriety of erecting public and private buildings, and it was not long until the majority of the lots were sold and built upon. Gradually the business was drawn from the east side, till now the villages are about equal rivals in the merits of commerce.

On Aug. 10, 1872, the Village of McHenry was incorporated. At the first election held by the authorized voters of McHenry Village the following officers were chosen: R. Bishop, President; J.B. Perry, J.M. McOmber, H.C. Smith, John King and F.K. Granger, Trustees; Michael Kelter, Clerk, and Henry Colby, Treasurer.

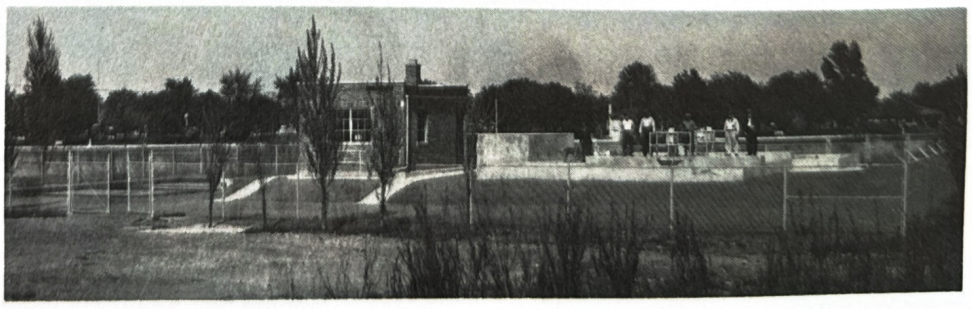
Fifty-one years later McHenry became incorporated as a City on May 15, 1923, the board members being: Pres. Dr. D.G. Wells; Trustees, Peter Doherty, John R. Knox, Albert Krause, R.I. Overton, Simon Stoffel, Frank Wattles; Clerk, Will Schreiner.

During the years 1850 to 1936 McHenry had several improvements, viz: The railroad in 1854; the telegraph established on Oct. 31, 1873, the first message being sent by Hon. F.K. Granger to Hall, Patterson & Co., and receiving an answer on that date. The first switchboard and exchange, owned by the Chicago Telephone Co., was established in the Stoffel building in 1897, under the management of Simon Stoffel.



The original telephone switchboard located at the McHenry Drapery building on Green Street in 1912. The telephone operators shown on the left are: Agnes Tesch Bienapfl, Bertha Wolf Mertes, Alice Simes. The head Operator is unidentified.

McHenry Waste Water Treatment Plant in the 1920's. ▼



A water power light plant was installed in the old Owen grist mill in 1908. In 1915 the Public Service Co. of Northern Illinois acquired possession.

The city water system was established in 1898; gas in 1912; the sewer system in 1923, and paving in 1923 and 1927. The new State Bridge over Fox River was opened for traffic in November 1927.

A public library was organized in 1936 by the Mothers Club, being located in the Community High School. Up to then it had been supported by the Mothers Club and by public donations.

EARLY SETTLERS

We commence our history of the town of McHenry in the year 1834, when what are now known as McHenry and Lake Counties formed the north part of Cook County. At this time the land was unsurveyed and in possession of a wandering tribe known as Potawatamie Indians. They were an ignorant, but quiet, inoffensive people who subsisted chiefly by hunting and fishing and whose only domestic animals were the dog and the Indian pony. The Indian title to these lands was extinguished by treaty in 1835. Emigration to the West really commenced in the fall of 1836. A few found their way into what is now McHenry County.

The first settlers of this county were composed of two classes, the one was that class that float along on the tide of emigration for purpose of plunder, and the other who came here to secure homes and an honorable living. The former soon floated away, while the latter remained, and their names appear in this record. They were mostly from the eastern states, and came to this county either by steamboat around the lakes, or by team overland through Chicago and thence by following the Indian trail to the banks of the Fox River.

Among the number that decided to locate here were three intelligent and enterprising young men named Henry W. and John V. McLean and Wm. L. Way, who had heard that a new county was to be set off from Cook County and organized in the spring following. They were highly elated with the prospect of settling in a new county, so they started from somewhere down the Fox River and headed their way up the banks until they arrived at a spot a short distance below the present village of Algonquin, when they encamped for the night, and to make preparations to enter, as they termed it, an unexplored region. The next morning they travelled up the river until they arrived upon the ground where the old village of McHenry would be. They made their claim and it was then arranged that Henry McLear should go to Vandalia, which was at that time the capital of the State, get the boundaries of the county established and commissioners appointed to locate the county seat. This plan was carried out and the commissioners, after examining several points, established the seat of Justice at McHenry on the 9th day of May 1837. In the meantime during the winter of '36 and '37 several new emigrants arrived. Some of the earliest mentioned were Christy Wheeler, John McOmber, Daniel, Owen, David and William McCollum, B.B. Brown, John and Geo. Boone, Wesley Ladd, Abial and Samuel H. Walker, Michael and John Sutton. Other names that have been recorded that settled about the same time between 1836 and '39 are: Chauncey Beckwith, James Button, Jacob Jackson, Merrill Thompson, Manley Turner, Jacob Story, James Salisbury, Abijah Barnum, Joel Wheeler, Peter Robinault, Benj. Bosworth, Freeman and Alden Harvey, Enos Bernarde, A.H. Hanly, Smith Herrick, John McQueen, Col. Star, E. Keyes, Horace Long, Gideon Colby, Stillman Colby, George Frisby, James Gibbs, Isaac Griswold, Andrew Harsh, Matthew Carr, Chas. Smith, Wm. H. Hankins, George Gage, Abijah Smith, Benson Sherman, Mr. Richardson, Solomon Morey, Edmond Fleming, and Nathan Hait.

And from 1840 to 1845: John Flusky, Bryan Frisby, Michael Kelter, Wm. Walsh, Richard Bishop, Joseph Button, Page Colby, Robert Harrison, Charles Harrison, Alvin H. Parker, John W. Smith, Freeman Whiting, Solomon Dodge, Ira Colby, Wm. Mead, Nickolaus Frett, Nickolaus Adams, Jacob Schmitt, Stephen Bautes, John P. May, Mathias Lay, Henry Thelen, Wm. Klein, Mathias Wagner, Peter Miller, Frederick Schmitt, John Freund, Lucius Hobart, Joseph Tuttle, John Frisby, Philip Sutton and James Gage Fay.

The Riverside Hotel which was built in 1864 still stands in the same location at the corner of Riverside Drive and Elm Street. Picture was taken c. 1920's.

The names following were found in an old Day Book of John McOmber kept in 1837 and on to 1841: In 1836, Solomon Morey and Samuel Terwilliger; in 1837, John Matties, Chas. Salisbury, Dr. McAllister, Abijah Barnum, E.C. Brainard, Roger and Henry Stewart, Mr. Williams, Freeman Adkins, and Mr. Tower; in 1838, Geo. Barnes, Sam Greenleaf, Wm. Holcomb, John McCollum and Luke Hale; in 1839, Nathan J. Hait, Dr. Bosworth, Rufus Soles, and Mr. Adams; in 1840, Christopher Walkup, James Dufield, Emery Johnson, Joel Johnson, Webster Colby, Mr. Wells, Dr. Lewis, L. C. Gates, S. Wylie, Geo. Truesdell, Geo. McCollum, D.O. Dickenson, D. Valentine, Mr. Bloom, H.G. Wilson, Mr. Wightman, H.O. Stone, Geo. Smith, Mr. Munger, Will Talbot, Henry Matthews, Mr. Kingston, E.W. Smith, Sam Terwilliger, Manly T. Turner, and Hibbard Smith; in 1841, William Beach, Levi Merriman, and Joseph Webster.

According to history the first log cabin was built in 1836 on what was the L.C. Gates property, west of the Riverside House. The west end was occupied as a dwelling house, the center had bunks with hay in them to sleep on, and the east end was occupied by the cows and hens. Some records state that this cabin was built by Christy Wheeler, and others disclose that it was built by Henry McLean.

John McOmber, also known as Esquire McOmber, erected a log cabin on the site where the E.M. Owen House now stands. In 1837, more permanent homes were built. John McOmber building on the hill in West McHenry, now known as the Christy House. It was made from the first timber sawed at the mill where he was employed. During this same year comfortable residences were built by Dr. Christy Wheeler, Rev. Joel Wheeler, Herman N. Owen, James A. Salisbury and A.S. Barnum.

About this time B.B. Brown built his famous "Log Cabin Tavern", which became one of the historic hostelries of the State, where the Riverside House now stands. It was a double log house with an "L" attached, part of the structure being two stories high. In 1845, John W. Smith bought this tavern, and later he and his nephew, David Smith, built the Riverside House.

The first six marriages solemnized in McHenry Co. were: Nov. 30, 1837, Mr. Jonathan Imeseon and Miss Mary Wray (the first in the County); Feb. 1, 1839, Mr. Chas. Frame and Miss Mary Dufield; Feb. 22, 1839, Mr. Fellows and Miss Christina Robinault (these four by Elder Joel Wheeler); Jan. 29, 1839, Mr. Luther S. Barnham and Miss Charlotte Joslin, by Wm. L. Way, Justice of the Peace, and Nov. 28, 1841, Mr. Samuel Greenleaf and Miss Elizabeth McOmber, by Joel H. Johnson, Justice of Peace.

The first birth in McHenry County was Ellen Augusta Wheeler, Sept. 20, 1838, daughter of Christy Wheeler. Jonathan and Mary Imeson had a son born Jan. 18, 1839.

In closing this sketch we want to mention some of McHenry's citizens who were members of the Legislature of the State of Illinois. The earliest on record is Hon. Henry McLean. Later, we find Hon. George Gage who was a member of the XVII General Assembly, having been elected to the House of Representatives in 1850, and elected as an Independent candidate to the Senate of the XIX General Assembly in 1854. Hon. Richard Bishop was a member of the Legislature in 1872. Hon. F.K. Granger was elected as Representative in 1874 and was re-elected three times without opposition. During his last two terms, he was temporary Speaker of the House, having the honor of being the first to preside in the new State Capitol Building. Later in 1898 he was elected Senator of the 8th District Senatorial.

In 1930 Thomas A. Bolger was elected to the General Assembly and re-elected in 1932 and 1934.

EARLY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Business enterprises in McHenry showed an astonishing amount of growth in the years following the arrival of the three original settlers and with the coming of several more settlers, and at least one family in 1837, the business necessary to the maintenance of the settlement sprang into existence.

The first Post Office was established in 1837, with Christy Wheeler as the first Postmaster. He held the office for one year and was succeeded by H.N. Owen. The third Postmaster was John W. Smith, who came to McHenry in 1843. The first Post Office was in a rude log building near the present site of the Riverside Hotel and when the railroad was built ½-mile west of McHenry in 1854, West McHenry sprang into existence. The Post Office was then moved to the West Side in 1882, and for a year McHenry was without a Post Office. Finally, through the efforts of Congressman Elwood, another one was established in 1883 in McHenry.

There seems to be some questions as to who operated the first store in McHenry. Original documents show that supplies were being sold as early as June, 1837 by John McOmber, though whether it was done in a store seems unauthenticated. The 1885 history of McHenry County lists Christy Wheeler as the first store-owner.

In addition, S.S. Greenleaf built and operated a shoe store in 1839, and a grocery store was being conducted in the same year by H.S. Bosworth. A general store was opened by Owen Brothers in 1851, and the moving of the John W. Smith store building to McHenry in 1854 from Smith's Corners completes the list of early stores.

The first saw-mill in McHenry was built in 1837 by a man named Barnum on the site of the old mill dam. He later sold it before completion to H.N. Owen and James Salisbury, the former adding a carding factory in 1841. (The latter was killed in the mill in 1844.) This early construction work in the mill was done by John McOmber. In 1851, E.M. Owen and his brother, H.N. Owen, built a grist-mill, using the same water power as the saw mill. A grist-mill was built in 1872 by A.H. Hanly, later owned by William Spencer.

Hunter Boat Factory on the east side of the Fox River, now occupied by Hansen Marine.

In 1841 a wagon factory was started by Richard Bishop, which made in addition sleds and plows. This factory was destroyed by fire in 1874, but was rebuilt on a larger scale in 1878. Mr. Bishop also built a pickle factory in 1882, and another was built in 1884 by a union of farmers near the railroad in McHenry. This later was operated by Christy, Walker & Co.

A butter and cheese factory was built in 1881 by Oatman & Sons in West McHenry near Hanly's mill and flourished for several years. A brick yard was operated in 1852 by Smith Covey, near the present site of the Community High School. Another brick factory was built in the spring of 1882 by a stock company and was later operated by Isaac Wentworth and Amos Whiting.

In 1868 the brewery was built by George Gribbler and many additions were made from time to time. The first hotel was built by B.B. Brown in 1837. It was a log building near the present site of the Riverside Hotel. The second hotel was built in 1838 by Horace Long and was called the Mansion House. It was in the same block as the Brown hotel, but the location is not definitely settled.

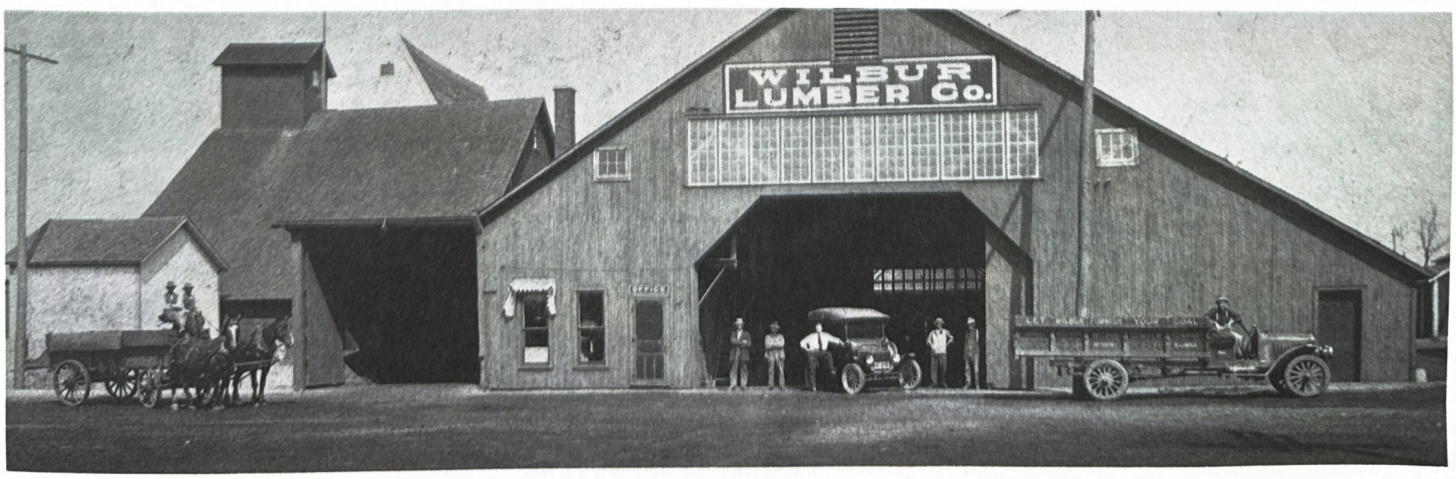
The Mansion House was used as the Court House until the frame Court House was built on the Public Park, and the building was later used as the McHenry House Hotel. In 1851 the Fremont was built on the present site of the Riverside Hotel, but was burned in 1859. The Riverside House was built in 1864 by John W. Smith. In 1858 the building known as the Parker House was built by George Gage and was called the Gage House. It was built in West McHenry and was destroyed by fire in July, 1890.

To summarize the very earliest industries by 1839: McHenry had two hotels, one dry goods and grocery store, one boot and shoe shop, one blacksmith shop (operated by Nathan Hait), one saw-mill and one carpenter and joiner shop.

Some of the oldest business enterprises still operating in 1936 in McHenry were: Insurance, Simon Stoffel; Men's Clothing, Jos. W. Freund; Furniture, N.J. Justen and Jacob Justen; Hardware, Mat Engeln; Cigar making, N.E. Barbian; Marble works, Henry Miller. Some of these being carried on by their sons and grandsons.

Some of the later businesses organized were: The Lumber Yard, established in 1873 by Smith and Snyder, later owned by the Alexander Lumber Co.; The McHenry Plaindealer, established in 1875 by J. VanSlyke and later owned by Chas. Renich of Woodstock. The first banking business was located in the rear of Perry and Owens' store in 1888. The McHenry State Bank was established in 1906, known as the West McHenry State Bank. Some other firms were: Hunter Boat Co., Math Weber and Sons, Building Contractors, and Stephen H. Freund, Contractor and Supervisor.

The old Wilbur Lumber Company located on the north side of Main Street, c. 1920's, later called Alexander Lumber Company. The McHenry Car Wash is now located on the site.



Early Churches

BAPTIST CHURCH

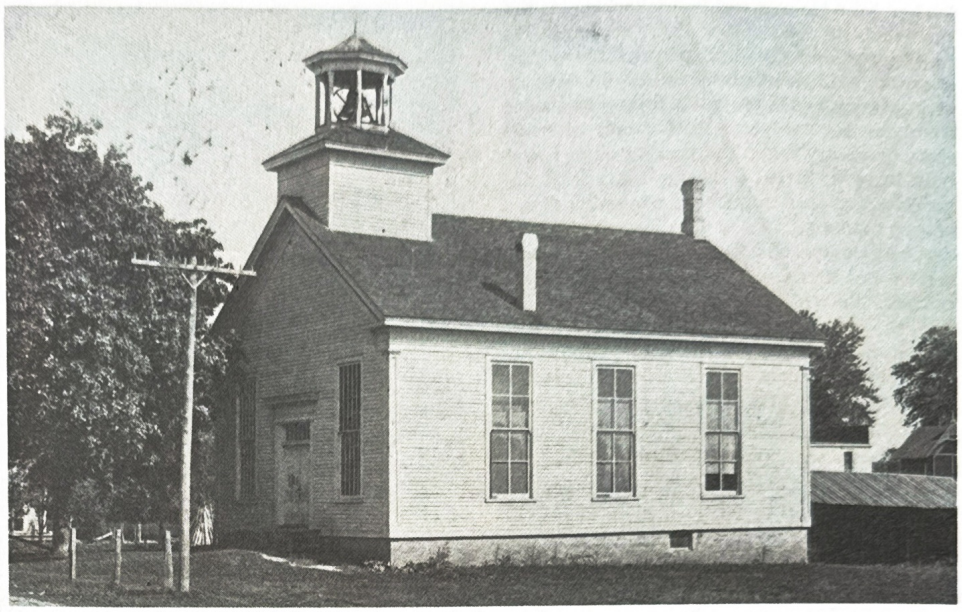
The Baptist Church was the first church to be organized in McHenry. Rev. Joel E. Wheeler, who came here in 1837, was the first minister in McHenry. In 1850 a brick church was built on the corner of Green and Elm streets. The Rev. Eliab Going was also a pastor in this church.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

This church was founded in 1840 by Rev. M. St. Palais, afterwards Bishop of Vincennes, Ind. (McHenry was in the diocese of Vincennes at that time.) The charter members were Michael Sutton, John Sutton, George Frisby and James Gibbs. We will not enumerate all the former pastors but will start with one who was well known and beloved by all, regardless of race or creed, Rev. Patrick O'Neill, who served from August 15, 1876 until April 10, 1906, nearly thirty years, when he died. Pastors succeeding him were Reverends Paul Burke, D. Lehane, H. Hagen, Charles Quinn, J. Lynch, M.J. McEvoy and Father William A. O'Rourke.

Father McEvoy saw the need of a new and larger church, which he erected in 1923. It had a seating capacity of about four hundred and fifty and a chapel adjoining which sat about one hundred and fifty and which could be opened into the main church during the summer season, making a total capacity of six hundred seats, so all could hear Mass. Father O'Rourke found it necessary to have four Masses celebrated each Sunday during the summer season to accommodate the summer residents and tourists.

St. Patricia C.O.F. was organized in 1897. The Altar and Rosary Society was organized in 1890 with Mrs. Mary Searles as president; Mary Powers, vice-president; Anna Welch, secretary and Father O'Neill, treasurer.



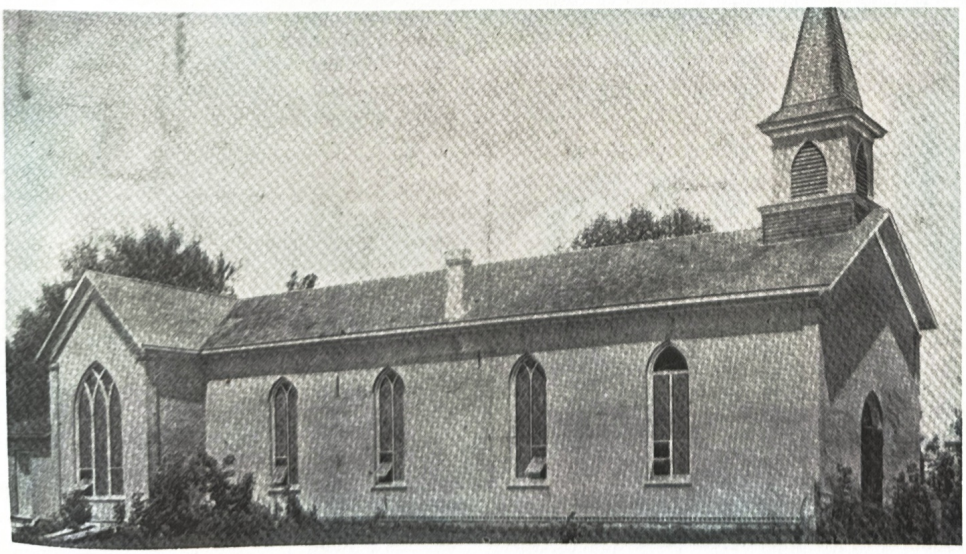
Old Universalist Church in 1912, located on Court Street where present Masonic Hall is situated.

UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

This church was organized January 17, 1853, with Rev. James R. Mack as pastor. The first members were R. Bishop and wife, D. Brown and wife, Frances Harrison and wife, C.B. Curtiss and wife, Christopher Seeber and wife, George Gage and A.H. Hanly.

The pastor and David Smith and R. Bishop undertook the task of raising a subscription to build a church. The first day they raised $1,000 and then reached the sum of $2,000. The following summer, they erected a church building 32 feet by 60 feet, costing $3,000, the extra $1,000 being paid soon after the completion of the church. Rev. Mack preached one year when he was succeeded by Rev. O. Roberts. This church was closed in May, 1929.

Old St. Patrick's Church on Washington Street located on the northwest corner of Washington and Court Streets, c. 1912. It was torn down and was rebuilt in 1922 at the present site.



METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In the year 1840, when McHenry was a mere hamlet, composed of a few houses and a handful of struggling, industrious pioneers, the Methodist Church was organized. At that time Rev. H. Stocking was presiding elder, Rev. William Vallette being the first preacher in charge. For a time this society met in the old school house where the Universalist Church now stands. Later they met in the Baptist brick Church. In 1859 the present building was erected while the circuit was in charge of Rev. C. Lazenbee.

The first members were Ira and Mrs. Mary Colby, Darius Reynolds and Mrs. L. Reynolds, Alden and Mrs. M. Harvey, Freeman Harvey, and Mrs. Abigal Harvey, with Freeman Harvey Class Leader.

The parsonage was built in 1879. Reverend Robert Pinnell was the pastor in 1936. The ladies of the Methodist Church have an organization known as the Ladies' Aid Society, which for a good many years has been very helpful in maintaining the church.

LUTHERAN CHURCH

This society was formed in 1876 under direction of Rev. H.G. Schmidt. They held services for a time in the Baptist Church and then in the Methodist Episcopal Church. On Sept. 19, 1891 they dedicated their own church which was located on John street. Charter members included Wm. Tesch and Fred Voeltz, Sr. The pastor in 1936 was Herman P. Meyer.

(Early Churches continues . . .)

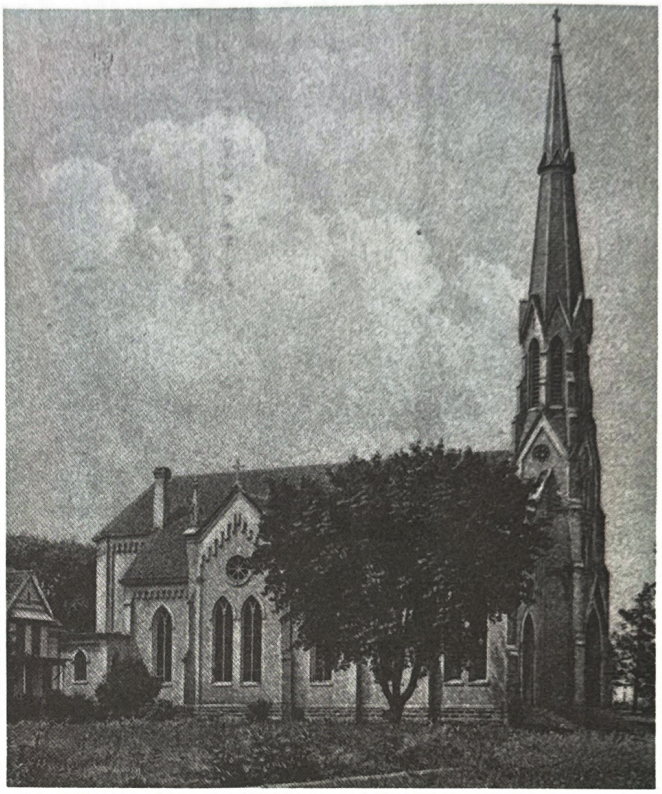
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

This church was founded in 1894. A committee composed of Dr. C. H. Fegers, Anton Weber, John Heimer and Frank Barbian visited the Archbishop, Most Rev. P.A. Feehan, D. D., of Chicago and obtained permission to purchase the old Public School and adjoining property. Mass was celebrated in the second story room for several years until larger quarters were necessary when the present church was built in 1898. In 1918, during the funeral services for the late Peter Scheid, a member of one of our pioneer Catholic families, the church was badly damaged by fire. It was immediately rebuilt and decorated, and became one of the prettiest church edifices in Northern Illinois. The early pastors were as follows: Fathers Kirsch, Barth, Royer, Berthold and Monsignor Charles S. Nix.

The old school building was still used in 1936. The Sisters in charge taught eight grades, accommodating about 135 to 150 children.

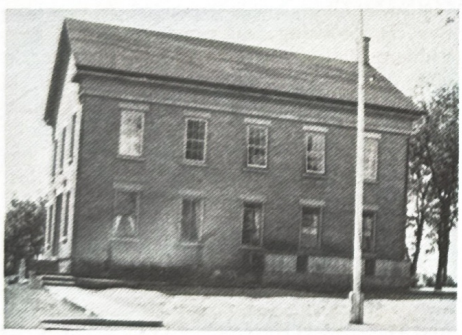
St. Mary's has many church societies — C.O.F., organized in 1914 for men; W.C.O.F., organized in 1906 for women; Holy Name organized in 1916; and the Christian Mothers organized in 1916.

Monsignor Nix found it necessary to have four Masses during the summer season of 1936 and was assisted by Father Miller. The church has a seating capacity of 500.

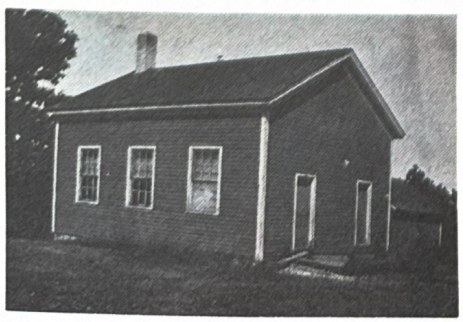


St. Mary's Church on Richmond Road in 1909. The roof and steeple were destroyed by fire in 1918 and rebuilt that same year.

Early Schools



This school was the first school building in McHenry. It was used as a public school until Landmark School was built in 1894. It was later purchased by St. Mary's and used as a parochial school until 1937 when it was destroyed. It was rebuilt, and today is the site of Montini Middle School.



Sherman Hill School in 1913, formerly located on the west side of Route 120 at McHenry Sand and Gravel pit.

The first school that we have found record of in McHenry was in the north end of B.B. Brown's log cabin Tavern in 1840, and taught first by Arminda McOmber, and later by Reliance Brown. Elder Joel Wheeler had a private boarding school at that time where Jacob Justen's business was in 1936. Later a school was built where the Universalist church now stands, Archelaus Sias, Caroline Fay and Frances Wheeler being teachers there.

In 1859, a public school was built and later used as the St. Mary's Parochial School, costing $6,000. Teachers there as Principals were J.B. Perry, William Nickle, James Graves, Oscar Graves, Mrs. McIntyre, Lucy Wake, Mrs. Walker, George Beers, J.J. Vasey, Walter Prickett, Sibre D. Baldwin and W.H. Strayer, and as primary teachers, Etta Torrance, Flora Harris, Lola Bishop Walsh, Del Brown Knight, Ada Granger Smith and Addie McOmber.

The west side erected a two-story brick building on John St., costing $2,000. This burned down in 1862. Then a one story building was built there, which was later made into a house, and owned by Fred Feltz in 1936. Georgiana Gage Clemens was the first teacher there, others being Hulda Smith Parker (Mrs. Simeon Covell), J. Vasey, Oliver Owen, Etta Kittle and John Kittle.

The old brick building across the street from the old Gage House was used as a school about 1860, with Arminda Talbot (Mrs. Charles Colby) as teacher. Part of the Gage House was used later, having Henrietta Pike (Mrs. Romulus Buckland), Maria Gage Stevens and Georgiana Gage Clemens as teachers.

St. Mary's was used up to the time of the building of the grade school in 1894, Prof. Strayer being the first principal. This served as grade and high school up to 1924, when a new community high school was built at the east end of Main Street (now East Campus.)

The first Alumni reunion was held in 1892. Those who attended were: Joel E. Wheeler, Loretta Walsh, Dr. Walter Besley, Harry Eldredge, Mrs. John Walsh, Lyle Howe, Fanny Osborne, Mrs. George Hoelscher and Thomas Walsh.

The first school board met in 1894. Isaac Wentworth was President and G.W. Besley, Clerk, and F.K. Granger, E.S. Wheeler, John I. Story, Simon Stoffel and C.H. Fegers were members.

The election organizing the high school district was December 20, 1919. The first Board of Education was Joseph W. Freund, John M. Schmidt, Thomas A. Bolger, Charles W. Harrison and Dr. D.G. Wells. The building was completed, ready for use, in September 1924. The dedication took place Dec. 13, 1924.

C.H. Duker came here when the Community High School was being built, and he worked faithfully in the best interest of the community and the school.

Early Organizations

Masonic Lodge

The first Masonic meeting was held February 26, 1854, when the By Laws were adopted and the name, Pistakah Lodge No. 158, was given to said lodge. At this time the active members were Z. W. Burnham, W.M., James R. Mack, S.W., Herman N. Owen, J.W., Horace Burton, Secretary, Jesse Flanders, S.D., William G. Burnham, J.D., and Abner Mack, Tyler.

In October of the same year, J.R. Mack was sent as a delegate to the Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois that assembled at Springfield. Upon his return, he brought home with him a charter granted to Z.W. Burnham, James R. Mack, H.N. Owens and others. The name given was McHenry Lodge, A. F. & A. M., No. 158. The Grand Lodge also appointed the above named grantees W. M., S. W. and J. W. in the order in which they appear with power to open said lodge.

The Masonic Hall was dedicated December 27, 1854. George Gage was the first to sign the membership book, on March 27, 1854.

Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus, No. 1288, was organized in 1906 by the late Thomas Carew Carey of Harvard, Illinois, and in 1936 was the largest council in the order in a city of the size of McHenry, having nearly 350 members. Joseph W. Freund was elected the first Grand Knight and M.J. Walsh was the second Grand Knight, who served for three years and who had the distinction of signing the first application. Clarence Martin was Grand Knight in 1936.

Order of the Eastern Star, No. 547

The order of the Eastern Star of McHenry Illinois, No. 547, received its charter October 10, 1905. The first officers were as follows: Maud Cormack, Worthy Matron, and Albert Holly, Worthy Patron.

Fox River Valley Camp, No. 3251

This was the first Royal Neighbors Lodge organized here. It was formed March 15, 1906, with twenty members. Anna Byrd was the first Oracle, and Martha Page as Vice-Oracle.

Riverview Camp

This Royal Neighbors of America Camp was organized March 9, 1911, by Mrs. Agnes Wentworth, assisted by Magdalena Bohr, at Weber's Hall. Thirty-one members were installed by Agnes Wentworth. The officers were: Oracle, Katherine Schaefer; Vice-Oracle, Elizabeth Schneider.

The present McHenry Lions Club was organized October 13, 1966 with Paul A. Schwegel as president. Pictured here are Lion members Ron Meurer, Jerome Moss, Terry Locke, and Curtis Bremer.

Modern Woodmen of America

Valley Camp, No. 97, Modern Woodmen of America, West McHenry, Ill., was organized December 31, 1885 with charter members as follows: A.S. Childs, John Evanson, H.H. King, F.A. Parker, Freeman Petley, I.N. Mead, H.E. Colby, C.A. Hutson, H.C. Mead, Will H. Mead, Jacob Hetzel and E.J. Hanly.

Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts were organized about 1922 with Al Evans as the first Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster in 1936 was Mervin Schoenholtz. The scout work has advanced greatly.

Girl Scouts

The Girl Scouts were organized on Dec. 19, 1932 with Mrs. Harry Durland as organizer and leader. Miss Alice Ward was the leader in 1936.

McHenry Mothers Club

The McHenry Mothers Club was organized Jan. 28, 1925, Mrs. Alford Pouse being the first president. Mrs. C.W. Goodell was president in 1936.

Through the hearty co-operation of Miss Mabel Hobbs, county nurse, and the physicians and dentists of McHenry, a successful Better Baby Contest was held in 1926. Preschool Health Clinics also were held.

The Mothers Club has donated freely many times to charity, Girl and Boy Scouts, and several other organizations.

It was through the club's efforts and the cooperation of the School Board and Supt. Duker that the kindergarten was established.

The dedication on March 31 and opening April 3, 1936 of the McHenry Public Library were happy and proud moments for the members of the Mothers Club. It was the wish of the Club that the library would grow and serve the people of McHenry for many years to come and that it might be a monument of the earnest efforts of the Mothers Club.

The Catholic Daughters of America

This society was organized October 31, 1920, by Miss Elizabeth Miller, with fifty charter members. The membership increased rapidly. Its chief activity is charity. It has helped many families especially during the depression.

The American Legion

The American Legion charter for McHenry was issued and signed by National Commander and Adjutant at Indianapolis, September 28, 1920, and countersigned by Commander and Adjutant for Department of Illinois at Bloomington, October 8, 1920. The first Commander of McHenry was Alford Pouse. The Legion does welfare work. The commander in 1936 was Ed Conway.

Royal Neighbors gathering in Ericksons Hall which was located on the northeast corner of Front and Main Streets which is now the site of an apartment house. The picture was taken c. 1940's.

American Legion Auxiliary

The charter of the American Legion Auxiliary was signed by National President and Secretary at Indianapolis February 6, 1929, and by the President and Secretary of Department of Illinois at Chicago, February 16, 1929.

The first president was Mrs. Jennie Herrold. The president in 1936 was Mrs. Eva Bacon. The Legion Auxiliary devotes its time to welfare work.

The Juveniles of the American Legion Auxiliary

The Juveniles of the American Legion Auxiliary was organized in 1936. The little girls were installed in office in April of that year.

Daughters of the G.A.R.

A charter was issued to James B. Perry, Fortress No. 11, November 2, 1926. The first president was Emma Fay, the president in 1936 was Calla Perkins.

The Civil War Veterans of McHenry were as follows: James B. Perry, John B. Colby, E.C. Carpenter, Edwin A. Beers, M.D., Jesse Bennett, Chester Howard, James Kittle, Edward Lawless, Wm. Hutson, Chas. Wilson, George Schreiner, William Schreiner, Joseph Neuman, Gerritt S. Ainsworth, Wm. E. Holmes, C.H. Ostrander, H.S. Gregory, John R. Brent, Simon Parker, Chas. T. Eldridge, Clinton D. Rorer, Christian Knoll, Wm. E. Salisbury, Geo. Blackman, George Rothermel, Jacob Bishop, Lawrence D. Blackman, John M. Nash, Isaac N. Powell, Wm. H. Claxton, David P. Woodburn, Julius Thomas, John R. Doran, Willard V. Smith, R.J. Osman, C.H. Fegers, Peter Schreiner, Anton Weber, Michael Justen, Henry Mead, James Wilson, Leonard E. Bennett, Albert Snow, Nickolas Bishop, J.J. Chase, George McDonald, John P. Heimer, Peter Thelen, Richard Aylward, Casper Wirfs, Joseph Heckner, Richard Thompson, Nickolas Blake, J.C. Clemens, Wm. H. Harrison, Chandler T. Harrison, Jerry Smith, Mat Weber, Richard Givens, Philip Haupris, Thomas Powers, and William Carey.

Automobiles lined up for "War Work Drive" on Waukegan Road during World War I.

The Spanish American War Veterans were James A. Perry, Harry H. Hanley and Jess VanSlyke.

Some World War I Veterans are Charles F. Geske, Walter Geske, George Nichols, Victor E. Peterson, George P. Schreiner, Robert Martin, Nicholas Meyers, Edward Bolger, Alfred Richardson and Carl Patzke.

Mrs. Samantha Button had the unique distinction of being the last mother of a Civil War Veteran. He was Captain Clinton Rorer, one of the three sons. He enlisted in Company H, 18th Illinois Cavalry in February, 1864.

The McHenry Choral Club is shown in performance at East Campus High School in the Spring of 1952.

The First Settlers

HENRY W. McLEAN

Henry W. McLean, widely known as a politician, was one of the oldest settlers of the county. He was born in Columbia County, N.Y., March 10, 1808. His father, John D. McLean, was a Scotchman, who came to America when young and served in the Revolutionary War. Henry W. was reared on a farm, and at the age of 22 commenced the study of law. In 1834 he was admitted to the bar in New York State, where he pursued his profession until 1836. He then came west to McHenry Co., locating at McHenry, where he was admitted to the bar in 1842 and he figured prominently in the early politics of the county.

BOONES & McCOLLUMS

The Boones came from Ohio in 1836. William died in Greenwood in 1883 and John was a resident of the county for sixty years, when he moved to Iowa.

The McCollums also came from Ohio; John moved to Minnesota about 1852 where he remained until his death in 1880. William made his home in McHenry Co., until his death in 1884; David died in McHenry in 1880; he had been a resident of the county most of the time since he settled in it.

Gilbert Building in 1885, located on the northeast corner of Borden and Main Streets, which is now occupied by Crystal Plus and Mac's Barber Shop.

CHAUNCEY BECKWITH

Chauncey Beckwith was born in Newport, N.H., February 16, 1811, a son of Jabey and Catherine Beckwith. In May 1836 he left N.H. and came to McHenry Co., Ill. and laid a claim. He remained here one year, improving his land, and in June 1837 went to N.H. and was married to Sophronia Thatcher, daughter of Elias and Sally Thatcher. They were married Aug. 8, 1837 and the same day started for their new home, arriving Sept. 10. They later acquired 250 acres of fine land. They had two children, Ira, who died in 1869 and George, who married Ernestine Irish.

SAMUEL H. WALKER

Samuel H. Walker was born in Hebron, N.H., April 5, 1811 and came of good English ancestry. When a young man he went to Boston, where he secured a position in a box factory, working for the meager salary of 50¢ per day, but acquiring at the same time valuable business experience. In 1836 he moved to McHenry Co., Ill. He furrowed his claim on a 40 acre tract in McHenry Twp., and there began a home for himself and his brother, Abial, who came west in the same year. In time this, together with other lands, was transformed into a neat, well-cultivated farm, and later he became an extensive land owner. He was the father of Nina Cristy.

DR. CHRISTY G. WHEELER

Dr. Christy G. Wheeler and his family were the first to settle in McHenry, arriving here from New Hampshire in 1836.

Although the Indian title to land had been extinguished during 1836, the land was still unsurveyed and only an occasional log cabin in the country had been built. There were no school houses or churches and no highways had been laid out, no bridges across streams had been built, no rails for fences had been split, and the roofs of the log cabins consisted of oak shakes (split clapboards) laid on poles in lieu of rafters with smaller poles laid over them to keep them from blowing away. Neither sawed lumber nor nails were used.

Dr. Wheeler opened a small store in McHenry and this with the practice of medicine occupied his time while he lived. He came west for his health and died at the age of thirty-two years.

He was the first postmaster, the office being established in 1837.

One cold morning in the winter of 1836, Dr. Wheeler's shanty caught fire. While on the roof trying to extinguish the flames he was delighted to hear a musket discharged some distance east of Fox River which gave him notice of a hunter or settler nearby.

Christy Wheeler, Wm. L. Way and John McLean were appointed judges of the first election held in the county. The place of election was ordered to be at the house of Christy Wheeler on July 3, 1837.

EDMOND FLEMING

Edmond Fleming came from Limmerick Co., Ireland about 1832. Lived in New York a short period, Mr. Fleming working on the Erie Canal. He moved to Chicago in 1834 and refused to buy the land on which the Court House stands for $1.25 per acre, because it was too wet and low.

In 1836 he took up a grant from the government a mile west of Burton's Bridge, five miles south of McHenry and gradually acquired about 800 acres of land, the present Fleming farm of 246 acres being a part of the original.

When Edmond Fleming and family came to their land in the fall of the year, they made a shelter by digging into the side of a hill and bracing it up with logs and this was their home the first winter. Their food consisted mainly of boiled grain and wild game, the nearest trading posts being Waukegan and Chicago.

Twice a year a missionary from Vincennes, Ind., visited and instructed the people of the Catholic Faith and mass was said in log cabins.

Edmond Fleming had three sons, Michael, Patrick and John, and two daughters, Mary and Catherine. They all moved westward with the exception of John who stayed on the farm. He married Bridget Grant in 1862 and to this union twelve children were born.

Edmond Fleming died in 1878 at the age of 84 years and is buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery in McHenry. His wife was buried at sea.

JOHN McOMBER

John McOmber, son of Abner McOmber and Isable Wait, was born November 11, 1794 at Boston, Massachusetts. Died at McHenry, Ill., May 27, 1884. He was of sterling Scotch ancestry, coming to America on the Mayflower. They were Quakers or "Friends" in Religious Belief, and served in the Revolution. In 1810 he moved with his parents to Galway, Saratoga, New York, where he met and married Betsy Monroe, Jan. 1, 1817. They located in Colesville, New York, where seven children were born to them, Matilda, Arminda, Betsy Elizabeth, Henry Morari, John Maurice, Alfred Elisha who died in infancy, and Warren Monroe.

During the fall of 1836, the family began their entourage to Illinois, overland, arriving in McHenry during March of 1837, where the only sign of habitation was a shack occupied by three men, Henry McLean, John McLean and Wm. L. Way.

He built the first log cabin on what is now the E.M. Owen Estate, where many newcomers found a haven. The first names registered are Herman Owen and Charles Salisbury. The first entry on his business Day Book is: June 20, 1837, sold a small order of groceries to Christy Wheeler and started work in the saw mill with Abijah Barnum. Sept. 20, 1837, he started to build for himself the first frame house from the first lumber planed in the mill. In Nov. 1837 he built a house for John McLean, hewing and framing at eighteen shillings per day and boarding himself. July 1838, he started a house for Luther Hale, and also one for Joel Wheeler. Oct. 1839, he built an oven in the new house of Christy Wheeler. July 1838, he started the Court House; December 1842, the school house. In 1853 he started building the Universalist Church, giving a year of his time and labor, being one of its founders and faithful workers. He was familiarly called "Squire" McOmber, having been a Justice of the Peace in New York State. He was loved and esteemed by all, and leaves a record that is worthy of emulation.

BENJAMIN B. BROWN

Benj. B. Brown of Mass. married Ann L. Way of N.Y. For several years he manufactured cloth and afterwards bought a farm near Penn Yan, N.Y. He came to McHenry Co. in 1837 in the spring, just on a tour, leaving his family. He found W.L. Way, his brother-in-law here, also Christy Wheeler and family and Henry McLean. Not long after he built his famed "Log Cabin Tavern."

GEORGE GAGE

George Gage was born in the town of Litchfield, Herkimer Co., N.Y., on August 30, 1813 and died Dec. 19, 1899. In 1835 he came west and lived two or three years in a pioneer cabin near the south bank of what is now known as Gage's Lake, being named after him and his brother, Leonard, who were the first settlers in the vicinity. He was married on July 4, 1838 to Martha Persis Heald, born in New York on Oct. 7, 1817. They had four children, Alsena, Ellen, Maria and Georgiana.

He lived at Gage's Lake until 1847 when he purchased and moved onto the farm later owned by Will Whiting. He later owned Gage Town now known as West McHenry, Ill. He spent much of his time in promoting enterprises for the benefit of the public, being one of the prime movers in securing for the village, the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad in 1854.

WM. H. HANKINS

Wm. H. Hankins was born in New York City in 1808, where he lived until coming to McHenry, June 1, 1837. He was a saddler by trade and continued here until his retirement. He then went to Indiana, where he died in 1888.

JACOB STORY

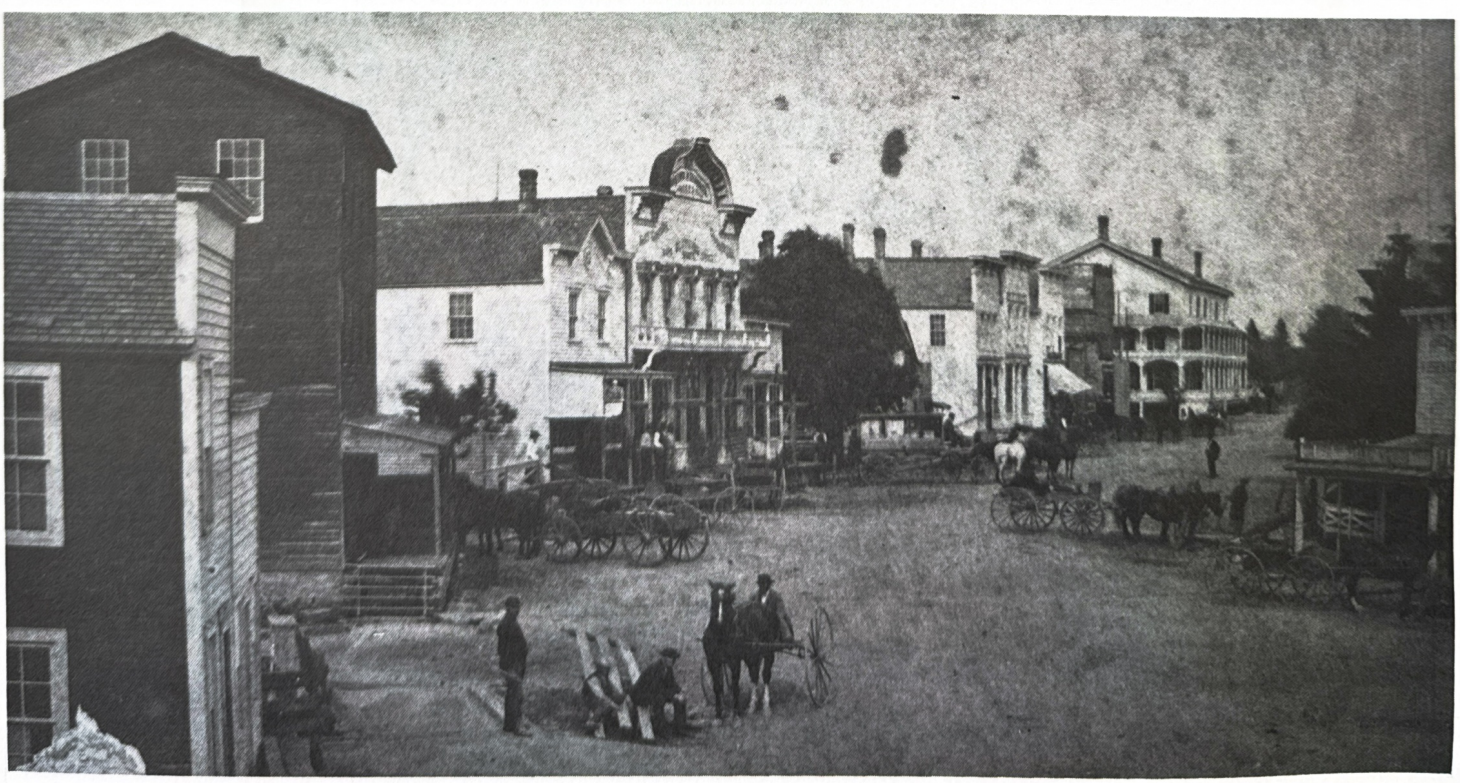
Jacob Story was born in Vermont, December 25, 1814, a son of John and Rebecca Story. On Dec. 10, 1837, he came to McHenry County. In 1840 he bought 120 acres of land and began working for himself. In 1853 he started a dry goods store in McHenry and later in 1856 engaged in the loaning and real estate business. He was married Sept. 15, 1844 to Mary A., daughter of Ira and Mary Colby. They had two children, Julia and John I.

BENSON SHERMAN

Benson and Wealthy (Gates) Sherman came here from Volney, N.Y., about 1838. They settled on what is known as the Samuel Sherman farm. He later became the owner of three or four hundred acres of land.

DANIEL OWEN

Daniel Owen and his son, Edwin M. came to this part of the country from LeRoy, N.Y. in 1837 and to McHenry in 1838. There were four brothers, Herman N., Oliver W., Edwin M. and Harvey and two sisters, Mary and Lodenne Salisbury, later Long. They were engaged in farming, also ran a saw mill and a grist mill, at that time the best mill in the county. Later they carried on a general store and were in the agricultural implement business.



Shown is the north side of Main Street in West McHenry ("Gagetown") in 1883, looking east. The white building in the rear is Gage House.

DR. HENRY T. BROWN

Dr. Henry T. Brown (B.B. Brown's son) came here in 1839 with his brothers and sisters. They came by canal and the lakes to Chicago. They hired a team and driver to transport them from there to Elgin, to their destination. His father owned a ferry across Fox River at that time and young Henry was given the part of ferryman. Later he entered medicine under Dr. James McAllister at Ringwood and later attended Rush Medical College three years. He went to California in the Gold Rush and returned in 1858 and built up an extensive practice. He was one of the founders of Masonic Lodge and Knights Templar.

WESLEY C. LADD

Wesley C. Ladd was born Dec. 5, 1810, in Hebron, a small village at the north end of Newfound Lake in Grafton Co., N.H. He came to Illinois in 1837, arriving in McHenry on July 20, where he visited the Walker brothers, later taking up a part of their claim and other lands. In a letter addressed to a friend in Hebron, N.H., bearing the date of Nov. 30, 1837, he wrote as follows: "I think that this country is the best place that I have ever seen for young people that are just setting out in the world and that they can find for any business that they have a mind to engage in life." He married Caroline Colburn in Hebron, N.H., Sept. 27, 1846. They were the parents of two children, James C., and Frederica E. Mrs. Ladd died Oct. 1, 1853. Wesley Ladd re-married on July 2, 1854, at Wilmot, Wis. to Phoebe Haley. They were the parents of six daughters. Mrs. Ladd died Dec. 28, 1894 and Mr. Ladd on March 25, 1897.

REV. JOEL WHEELER

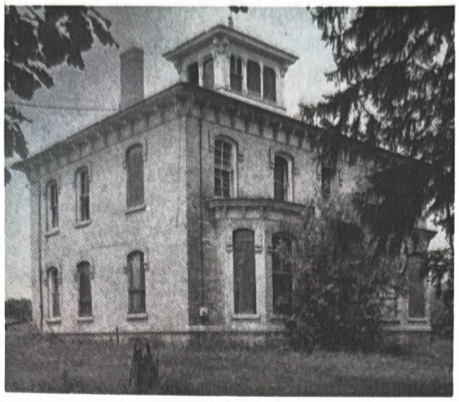
Rev. Joel Wheeler was the first minister of the gospel to locate in McHenry county, arriving at the village of McHenry on Aug. 17, 1837, from Dunbarton, N.H., where he was born Sept. 19, 1808.

On August 19, 1837, he delivered the first public religious services ever held in the county. His field of labor extended from Milwaukee on the north to Joliet on the south, east to Lake Michigan and west to Dubuque, Iowa. Elder Wheeler blazed the way for a wagon road from Lily Lake to Wauconda which afterwards became an established highway.

He had been known to preach at Algonquin in the morning, Dundee in the afternoon, and at some log dwelling in the evening. His son, Eugene, began driving for him at the age of five years, allowing the elder to study his sermons along the way.

Rev. Wheeler built the first frame house in what is now McHenry immediately after his arrival here. The main room was reserved for church and school purposes. In 1838 he opened what was called a boarding school, this being the first school of its kind in the county. A number of early physicians in northern Illinois received their training in this institution.

The family was of sturdy Welsh stock, Jonathan Wheeler, great grandfather of Rev. Joel Wheeler, having emigrated to America about the middle of the seventeenth century, settling at Salem, Mass.



The abandoned A.H. Hanly homestead which was built in the 1860's, was located on the site of the McHenry State Bank's Weber building on Crystal Lake Road. Vandals playing in the structure caused a fire which totally destroyed the building on November 13, 1975.

ALEXANDER H. HANLY

Alexander H. Hanly was born Aug. 23, 1816 at Olean, N.Y. He came to Illinois Feb. 12, 1837 and to McHenry County in March. He was married Oct. 3, 1841 to Susan Sherman. Mrs. Hanly taught school in her father's cabin before there was any school in the neighborhood.

MICHAEL SUTTON

Michael Sutton was born in 1809. He came from Kilkenny, Ireland in 1837. He died in McHenry, Nov. 28, 1880 and was buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

JOHN WIRE SMITH

John Wire, youngest son of Aaron and Hitty (Hawley) Smith, was born July 12, 1805, in Johnson, Vt. His first wife, whom he married Dec. 3, 1824 in Hyde Park, Vt., was Clarissa Clemens. They were the parents of ten children, all but two born in Vermont. In 1839 he came to Illinois, visiting his brother Abijah. He was so well impressed with the country that in 1841 he brought his family here and started farming. In 1843 he bought the B.B. Brown tavern and was postmaster during the time that he ran the tavern. In March 1845 he bought the Boone claim of 320 acres and built a store and a home there. There was a blacksmith shop there run by Joshua Chase and a log cabin occupied by Allen P. Colby and they called the place Smithville. Upon hearing that the railroad was coming through McHenry he moved his store there and retained an interest in it for a number of years. He was fond of nice stock and had made trips east for full blood horses and sheep which were the nucleus of his stock. He and three other men left on March 27, 1850 for the "Gold Rush". The party went overland via Fort Laramie and the Platte, returning via the Isthmus of Panama. Mrs. Smith died about one month after his return in 1851. Mr. Smith married as his second wife, Lyntha A., a daughter of Isaac and Annie (Erwin) Griswold. They were the parents of one daughter and five sons. John W. died Nov. 17, 1890 and Mrs. Smith, Feb. 3, 1897.

ABIJAH SMITH

Abijah Smith, during our last war with Great Britain, was drafted for the battle of Plattsburg, Sept. 11, 1814, but did not reach the battlefield until the engagement was ended. He was the first of the family to go west. In 1839 he took up a claim in McHenry east of the Fox River. Then he returned home to Vermont and sent his son, Willard, to hold the claim for him. This he did, building a shanty on it, where he received his father and the remainder of the family in August, 1840. Abijah's son, Aaron, a carpenter, soon put up a wing for a new house, and not long afterward the main part, which was two stories high. The upper story was unfinished, and was used as a dance hall. People came there to dances from Milwaukee, from South Port, (Kenosha), and from Little Port, (Waukegan). It was a fine house for that early day. It became the family home and there Abijah and his wife, Thankful Griswold, died.

MICHAEL KELTER

On July 4, 1841, Michael Kelter, with his grandmother Sutton, his mother and two younger brothers, John and Thomas, reached McHenry from Bigwood County, Kilkenny, Ireland, and settled on land two miles south of town. His uncles, Michael Sutton and John Sutton, located here about 1836. James Gibbs and his brother, Watt Gibbs, also came about the same time. George Frisby, whose wife was Auntie Kittie Sutton and their large family came at the same time as the Kelter family and located near them on what was afterward known as the "Irish Prairie", as numbers of County Kilkenny people followed from year to year. From these four families the two Suttons, Michael and John and their sisters' families, Kelters and Frisbys, many of their descendants are living in and around McHenry today. They also formed the nucleus of the first of St. Patrick's congregation though the church was not built for a few years. The people went in the meantime to what was then known as the "Settlement" and later at Johnsburg by ox-team, a day's journey.

The road from Chicago was only a wagon-track blazed through the woods on trees and corduryed through the sloughs. Upon their arrival on the banks of the Fox River the first to greet them was a band of Indians in camp. They were ferried across the river by B.B. Brown. Wolves roamed the prairies and children coming to school had to take big dogs on leashes to protect them. As newcomers arrived from the old country they were given shelter and helped to build their cabins, break the land and plant their crops.

JOHN FRISBY

John Frisby was born in Kilkenny, Ireland in 1773. He came to America in 1841. He died Jan. 8, 1851 and was one of the first to be buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

GEORGE FRISBY

George Frisby was born in Kilkenny, Ireland in 1810. In 1814 he came to McHenry, Illinois. He died March 1, 1865, and is buried in St. Patrick's cemetery.

IRA COLBY

Ira Colby was born in Danville, Caledonia Co., Vermont, December 27, 1803, a son of Thomas Colby, a native of Newburyport, Mass., of English descent. He remained in his native state till the fall of 1840, when he came to Illinois and settled in McHenry. He established the first prayer-meeting in McHenry. He was elected Justice of the Peace soon after his arrival and served twenty-three consecutive years. He was a school treasurer several years and held other offices. He was married to Mary Stocker, a native of Vermont of Scotch descent. They had a family of eleven children — Newell S., Mary A., Abigail, Sarah (wife of Robert Sherburne), Franklin, Ora, Flora, John, Gideon, Henry and William.

NEWELL S. COLBY

Newell S. Colby was born at Danville, Vermont, Oct. 13, 1826 and in 1840 came here with his father. He was married Oct. 9, 1856 to Laura Etta Parker, who was born in Lyons, Michigan. He was a breeder of very fine horses. Many of them were sent to all parts of the U.S.

ANDREW THOMAS

Andrew Thomas was born at Windsor, Mass., Oct. 14, 1806. He was of Scotch descent and a carpenter by trade. On September 25, 1833, he was married at Mexico, N.Y., to Elvira A. Brown. They came here in Sept. 1840. He was one who helped to secure the C. & N.W. railroad through McHenry County.

NICHOLAS FRETT

Nicholas Frett settled on the Frett farm near Johnsburg in 1841 and died in 1844. He is buried in St. John's cemetery, Johnsburg. One of his sons, William Frett, had among his children Jos. J. Frett, Ferdinand Frett, and Susan and Millie Frett of McHenry, and Chas. Frett of Aurora, Ill.

NICKOLAUS ADAMS

Settled in 1841 on Section 12, Range 99, McHenry Township. His family of boys and girls, and his grandchildren Wm. Adams, Michael and Joseph Schaefer lived in McHenry.

JOHN P. MAY

Settled in 1842 on Section 18, Range 9, McHenry Township. He had three daughters, Mrs. Martin H. Freund and Mrs. Peter Williams of McHenry and Mrs. Klapperich of Myer, Iowa and a son, Henry, who also lived in Iowa.

MATHIAS LAY

Settled in 1842 on Section 12, Range 9, McHenry Township. One daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth (Lay) May, lived in McHenry well into her 90's.

HENRY THELEN

Settled in 1842 on Section 18, Range 9, McHenry Township. He had two sons, Peter and John, and grandchildren Henry Thelen, Mrs. John M. Schmitt and Mrs. Jacob A. Miller.

JOHN FREUND

Settled in 1842 on Section 12, Range 8, McHenry Township. Died in 1891, leaving a family of boys and girls.

The north side of Main Street in West McHenry was the gathering place for many a meeting. Pictured left to right are: Mike O'Brien, H. Musner, Jim Fisher, Jack Walsh, Mr. Wirfs, Mr. Dolber, Mr. Lincoln, H.G.S., Frank Kimball, Ward Lincoln, Peter Brahan, Jake Hetzel, Nick Justen, Charlie Granger, Henry Smith, Orton Gilbert, Benny Buss, Henry Simes, Jack Halpin, and Rob Howard.

PAGE COLBY

Page Colby was born at Danville, Vermont, Sept. 22, 1820. His parents died while he was quite young, so he lived with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Colby. He attended school three months of the year until he was 18. Then he worked on the farm until 1842, when he came west, and landed in Chicago.

The next day he and another young man walked to McHenry. He made acquaintance with Abijah Smith and family, who owned the farm later owned by Peter A. Freund, this side of John Claxton's farm.

On October 11, he married Mehitable Smith, their daughter. He bought 80 acres of land for $130. They had a small frame house and lived downstairs and rented the upper rooms. After a few years he built a large brick house across the road where they spent the rest of their days. They had six children, Chas. C., May J., Ellen A., George W., Willard E. and Ida I.

He belonged to the McHenry Masonic Lodge and with Freeman Harvey was a Trustee of the Baptist Church. George Colby and family lived on the farm, also in a house just west of his land later owned by his son, Raymond.

McCollum's Lake, one mile north, looks quite different now. In Page Colby's time there was just a cellar in a clump of trees on his side of the lake where John McLean once lived, and on the other side, across the railroad tracks, a house where Henry McLean lived.

FREEMAN WHITING

Freeman, son of Zachariah and Lucy (Dodge) Whiting was born in Johnson, Lamoille Co., Vermont, Jan. 8, 1822. He came to Illinois in the fall of 1843. In Nov. 1844 he began work for John W. Smith. In 1845 he returned to Vermont but could not be satisfied with Vermont farming, after working on the Illinois prairies. He came back to Illinois and bought the William Jewell farm and after his marriage to Lucy Ann Smith, began housekeeping there, and through their industry, economy and good management were rewarded with deserved success. They were parents of four children: Adelbert, Laura, Lillian and Abbie. Mrs. Whiting died Sept. 26, 1912 and Mr. Whiting Sept. 13, 1915.

RICHARD BISHOP

Richard Bishop was born in Gainesville, Wyoming Co., N.Y., November 16, 1824. When he was twenty years of age, 1844, he decided to go west. He went by carriage to the boat landing where he sailed on the boat, "Bunker Hill" to Chicago and from there by stage to Waukegan. He worked there several months and then came to McHenry and engaged in blacksmithing. Later he purchased 80 acres of land and this proved a profitable venture. In time he became the owner of a large portion of the enterprises in McHenry. His property consisted of a large grist mill, wagon factory, agricultural implement store and pickle factory, besides a farm of 1000 acres. In 1874 he was engaged in banking at Woodstock and later studied law and was admitted to the bar. On October 19, 1849, he married Mary Maurice, having two children, Ormus and Lola (Mrs. Thomas J. Walsh).

(Top picture:) Northwestern Hotel and Buffet in 1909, which is the present location of the Depot Hotel on the south side of Main Street.

(Bottom picture:) J.D. Smith Jewelry Shop on the south side of Elm Street in the 1900's. Chain O'Lakes Travel, Inc. is now located on the site.

HENRY C. MEAD

Henry C. Mead was born in Pittsford, Vermont, July 31, 1839. He came to McHenry County with his parents in 1844. He was married to Lozett Kennedy, Sept. 27, 1864.

LUCIUS J. HOBART

Lucius J. Hobart was born in Ohio in 1822. He came to McHenry County when a young man. Eliza A. Carr (his wife) was born in England in 1826. Mr. Hobart worked around Ringwood and it was there that he met his wife, who came there when she was about nine years of age. The Carrs settled on Ringwood Prairie on what is the Beatty farm. The Hobarts settled in Ostend. They had a family of six children.

JAMES GAGE FAY

James Gage Fay was born June 28, 1826 in Buffalo, N.Y. He married Antoinette Holmes in Buffalo on July 26, 1855. He was the father of John Fay and engaged in the mercantile business here during the years of 1841 to 1845.

FRIEDRICH SCHMITT

Settled in 1842 on Section 24, Range 8, McHenry Township. A chapel was built on his land in 1843 in thanks to God for their safe voyage across the sea in 1842.

Program of the McHENRY CENTENNIAL 1836 — 1936

July 31 and August 1 and 2

McHENRY DAY — FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1936

George Johnson, Chairman

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. — Registration at City Hall.

8:30 a.m. — Golf, McHenry Country Club.
Rowing or swimming, Fox River.
Boat trip to lakes and lotus beds.

10:00 a.m. — Official opening of Centennial. Bells, fire siren.

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. — Visitation of historical and antique exhibits, Community High School.

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. — Open House. Visitation of places of interest.

1:00 p.m. — City Hall, Informal welcome by Mayor and City Officials.

1:30 p.m. — New Sewer Plant.

2:00 p.m. — Grade School.

3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. — Reception and tea by Mothers club at High School.

4:00 p.m. — St. Mary's School.

4:30 p.m. — Visits to places of interest, including the Country Club, Hunter's Boat Factory, West McHenry State Bank, Spencer's Flour Mill, St. Mary's Church, St. Patrick's Church, Universalist Church, Methodist Church and Lutheran Church.

7:00 p.m. — Crowning of Queen. The candidates for Queen and her court are: Ethel Granger, Mercedes Hayes, Jane Heimer, Marguerite Johnson, Miriam Sayler, Eleanor Sutton, Jean Whiting, and Vivian Whiting.

8:15 p.m. — First performance of Pageant at Community High School Campus.

HOMECOMING — SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

Ray McGee, Chairman
Marshal of the Day, Gilbert Howard

9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Registration at City Hall, Centennial Headquarters.

9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Historical and antique exhibits open.

10:00 a.m. — Parade, led by Marshall of the day, McHenry Band and Boy Scouts. Old Northwestern Train.

12 noon — Old Settlers' Picnic, City Park. Ox barbecue.

1:30 p.m. — Home Comers' Program. Music by Old Timers — J.F. Claxton, M.A. Conway, Will Quinn.
Frank Bennett, Master of Ceremonies.
Invocation — Rev. R. W. Pinnell.
Welcome — Peter J. Doherty, Mayor of McHenry.
Song, "Illinois" — Audience.
Roll call of registrations, introduction of guests.
Representatives from neighboring towns called on.
A toast to the McHenry of Today and Yesterday, Centennial Queen.
Fun in the Old Days — Dancing group.
Combined Chorus.
Address — C. H. Duker, Superintendent of McHenry Schools.
Combined Chorus — Songs from 1836 to 1936.
Stories of Pioneer Life — Written by Historical Committee and read by descendants of the early settlers.
Early Settlers — Miriam Sayler, a descendant of Rev. Joel E. Wheeler, Newell S. Colby and James R. Sayler.
Early Business Enterprises — Elmer Freund, descendant of Stephen Freund.
History of McHenry — George Johnson, Jr., descendant of F.K. Granger.
Schools, Churches, Lodges — Vivian Whiting, descendant of Freeman Whiting, Sibre Baldwin and J.W. Smith.
Community Singing — Led by Combined Chorus.
Benediction — Father Wm. A. O'Rourke.

5:00 p.m. — Old Timers' Ball Game. Arranged by L.F. Newman and Committee.

7:00 p.m. — Band Concert, City Park.

8:30 p.m. — Pageant.

Program of the McHENRY CENTENNIAL

CHURCH DAY — SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Registration at City Hall.

10:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Historical and antique exhibits open.

8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. — Church.

1:30 p.m. — Memorial Service in City Park. Mrs. J.E. Wheeler, chairman.

3:00 p.m. — Boat Parade. Atty. W.G. French, chairman. Boat races and water stunts.

8:15 p.m. — Pageant.

OUR OWN McHENRY

(To the tune of "Oh, My Darling Clementine.")

We have heard the praise of cities
North and south and east and west
But for us it's old McHenry
She's the one we love the best.
Oh McHenry! Oh McHenry!
Where the shady streets are lined
With the homes of friendly people
Peace and comfort there we find.

In the early pioneer days
When past generations came,
You were chosen for your beauties
Which today remain the same.
Oh McHenry! Oh McHenry!
Though in size, you're not immense,
You have kept your independence
Free from shallow, false pretense.

Those of us who no more have you
As our home from year to year,
Still rejoice in your achievements;
Gains in all that life holds dear.'
Oh McHenry! Oh McHenry!
We unite to sing the praise
Of your past and of your present,
And of all your future days.

—LENORA STEVENS VAN SLYKE, 1936

TO GREET YOU

As you celebrate this year
The advent of your birth,
Friends will gather from far and near
And join in all your mirth.

'Twill be a grand and glorious time,
For all who can attend;
People will come from every clime
And friend will meet with friend.

'Tis here we learned our A, B, C's
Those days stand out so clear.
We cherish many memories
Of schoolmates and teachers dear.

Those good old days all are passed,
But forgotten will never be.
Many questions will be asked
About those you will not see.

Where is Tom and Dick and Harry,
And all of the other boys?
Well most of them did tarry
In good old Illinois.

So here's to good old McHenry town
On the grand old river Fox,
With beautiful homes up and down,
On its banks above the locks.

—MATTIE SMITH OWEN, 1936

The Years 1936-1986

Editor's Note: The following highlights were gathered from the McHenry Plaindealer's archives and also from City Council meeting notes.

1936

• Winter weather broke all records in early 1936 with temperatures falling as low as 35 degrees below zero for days. Roads were closed, rural roads blocked for weeks and finally one-way lanes were opened on highways. Schools remained closed for weeks.

The big snow of January 1936, shows 3 children standing on a 6-foot snow bank on the corner of Richmond Road and Maple Avenue with St. Mary's Church in the background.

• McHenry Township broke all records for the number of votes cast in the Presidential election with a total of 1970 votes. The township went Republican.

• McHenry County was 100 years old on January 16, 1936, when on that date in 1836 state legislature created the county.

• The public library was dedicated in March. The new sewage plant was completed Oct. 4, a PWA project.

• Businesses which opened in 1936 included Betty Nielsen Dress Shop on Riverside Dr., Arthur Krause took over the McHenry Ice Co. from his father-in-law, M. J. Baur, and Earl Gorman took over the Standard Oil Station. The F. W. Coffman Co. opened in McHenry manufacturing, packing and distributing fine soaps, toilet preparations and other household necessities.

• The Plaindealer celebrated its 61st year.

• Leo Stilling became the pro at the McHenry Country Club.

• On Oct. 9 the McHenry County convention of the Royal Neighbors was held in McHenry.

• Several interesting robberies were noted in 1936. McHenry Ice Cream factory was the site of one — where thieves carried away the ton safe containing $300 in the new GMC truck owned by the company. All but the money was recovered. The Nick P. Justen Standard Oil station was also robbed and the attendant, Gilbert Nehreke, kidnapped.

• Two pair of twins arrived during the year. A baby boy and girl were born to Attorney and Mrs. A. Will and twin girls to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Weber.

• Ben Justen received the gold medal in the neatest farm contest.

• McHenry's ever popular lotus beds attracted many visitors in 1936. Another point of interest was the fact that McHenry had the only water mail route in the state.

• In contrast to the beginning of the year, Christmas was warm and rainy, breaking the record for warmest Christmas on record.

• Of all the items of importance in the year, the celebration of the city's Centennial ranked the highest. The 3-day celebration was held July 31 and August 1st and 2nd in the city park. General chairman for the event was R. I. Overton. Included in the festivities were an Old Settlers' Day Picnic, Sunday church day, a parade, pageants, exhibits of antiques, and band concerts. Miriam Saylor reigned as the Centennial queen.

1937

• Winning the April, 1937 election were R. I. Overton - Mayor; Regner, Bolger, Buss, Kreutzer, Ferwerda and George Freund -aldermen. Earl Walsh was elected clerk and Robert Weber, treasurer.

• The greatest building project of 1937 was the construction of the $75,000 St. Mary's — St. Patrick's parochial school. Also a large 2-story addition, 46' x 54' and basement at McHenry Brewery during the year and a $3,000 addition and improvement to the McHenry Country Club.

• A new precinct was created, making a total of four in the town of McHenry.

• A civic organization, known as the Lions Club, was formed with C. H. Duker as its first president and 22 charter members.

1938

• Among the changes taking place in the year 1938, we note the following. The George Stilling building on the corner of Elm Street and Riverside Drive was converted into a roller skating rink.

• On June 30, all McHenry telephones were changed to the new method of operation, in which the user signals the operator by merely lifting the phone receiver instead of turning a crank, as was formerly the case. A new central telephone office was constructed on Park Street, north of Elm Street.

• The High School Board purchased the Vasey property near the school in order to extend school property to take in the entire block. A tennis court was to be constructed on the site formerly occupied by the Vasey house which was moved a block and a half west on John St.

• The Universalist church was disorganized and according to its bequests, the church building was given to McHenry Masonic Lodge A.F. and A.M., and its bank account presented to the M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church for use in the remodeling of the church building.

• A Chicago/Northwestern passenger train, Chicago-bound, was derailed on Oct. 23 by an open switch at McHenry. Nineteen people suffered minor injuries. A plot was suspected as the switch had been obviously tampered with.

• 2076 people in McHenry county were on relief during Jan. 1938, an increase of more than 500 over the same period in 1937.

• Route U.S. 12, which was the only U.S. highway passing through McHenry, was relocated to make a turn to the east, just south of Richmond, cutting this city off entirely.

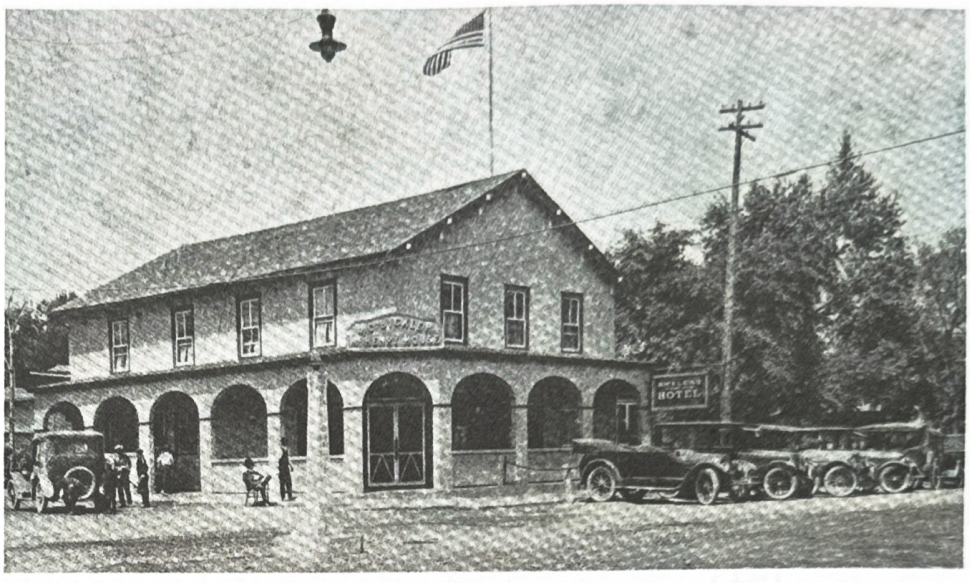
The famous Lotus Beds of Grass Lake, which drew tourists from Chicago who arrived by train, took the surrey to the Riverside Hotel and spent the weekend touring Lotus Beds.

1939

• A new store opened by Maurice Gladstone who chose the old telephone building on Green Street for his general dry goods.

• The McHenry House (Town Club) located on the northwest corner of Riverside Dr. and Pearl was to be totally remodeled. This old frame structure was built in 1838 by Horace Long and was called the Mansion House. Until the Court House was built and the county seat moved to Woodstock, the Mansion house was used as the Court House. It was the second hotel in the city, the first being a log building built by B. B. Brown in 1837.

• The entire second story of the McHenry House was being remodeled into modern kitchenette apartments to be rented year round. The first floor would be made over to contain a dining room and bar room. The porches were to be torn off and white shingles would replace the crumbling stucco.



Bickler McHenry House Restaurant in 1920, at the northwest corner of Riverside Drive and Pearl Street, now the location of the Town Club.

1940

• Extreme cold was recorded on Jan. 18, 1940, as the mercury dropped to 23° below zero.

• The West McHenry post office moved on April 28 into larger quarters in the Joseph W. Freund building on the south side of Main St.

• A very heavy snowfall bewildered local folks on May 1 and heavy snow continued to fall all day.

• A new store on Green St. owned by A. P. Freund was erected just south of the McHenry Ice Cream factory. Occupied by Gladstone Department Store, it was the largest independently operated store in McHenry County.

• Census of 1940 showed a total of 1,622 people living within the city limits of McHenry.

The Joe W. Freund and McCalister Drug Store on the south side of Main Street. It is the present location of Mar Ray Dance Studio.

1941

• Figures released by the Milk Industry Foundation revealed that McHenry County ranked tenth in the Nation for milk distribution.

• The newly formed McHenry Choral Club presented their first concert on March 23.

• On Aug. 11 fire caused by lightening destroyed the McHenry County Farmer's Cooperative Association's main building in West McHenry, loss estimated at $45,000.

1942

• A forty mile speed limit went into effect in Illinois on March 23. (This was an effort to conserve gasoline.)

• A large rubber drive was conducted along the Fox River with the collection of about 2,000 pounds of old tires and tubes. Proceeds were given to the USO.

• The last bond of $9,000.00 was paid on the high school in June.

• McHenry experienced its first blackout of the war on Wednesday evening, August 12, between the hours of 10:00 and 10:30 p.m., and was reported as most successful.

• Sugar rationing was in effect for most of the year. The first registration for consumers was held May 4th at McHenry Grade School. Persons with less than 6 lbs. of sugar on hand were given a ration book which was to be presented with each purchase of sugar.

• September — War showed a marked influence on our high school. The enrollment was the largest in history. Mathematical subjects, so urgently needed for government work, proved the most popular in the curriculum.

• On October 1st, the speed limit for Illinois was set at 35 miles per hour.

• A garage on Riverside Drive was being set up to make tents and other canvas articles needed by the government.

• In November gas registration took place at the local grade school. 1386 people signed up for gasoline ration books.

• Draft calls, in effect throughout the year, took many of our young men into service.

1943

• On January 15, 1943, a terrific blizzard struck our city, continuing for several days and followed by temperatures of 15 to 25 degrees below zero and a wind which piled drifts six to ten feet high. Schools were closed for two days while all available means were employed to open roads.

• Morse code joined the growing list of wartime subjects taught at the high school.

• A new food rationing system began April 1. The new program allowed each person about 2 pounds of meat, ¼ pound of butter, 7 ounces of cheese, 3 ounces of shortening and 12 ounces of margarine a week.

• Memorial Day opened the summer season in McHenry. Throngs of Chicagoans milled through McHenry streets and local residents wondered what had happened to gas rationing.

• At their June meeting, the City Council voted to pass an ordinance establishing a public library and authorized the levy of a tax to maintain it.

• Again, draft calls continued to take many of our young men into service throughout the entire year.

1944

• January — In reviewing the wartime casualties in the county since Pearl Harbor, it was discovered that there were thirty-five on the dead, missing, injured, or prisoner list.

• McHenry got its start as a manufacturing center when Joseph Nathanson & Co. opened a dress factory in the Buch building on Riverside Drive.

• New government food ration orders cancelling the value of many stamps marred Christmas for hundreds of McHenry area housewives.

• While McHenry and the surrounding community was not as hard hit as many places by the war in 1944, nevertheless, there were numerous announcements resulting from the war which brought sadness to local families.

1945

• January 14th, eighty-five young men and women met in St. Mary's - St. Patrick's school hall to form an organization called McHenry Catholic Youth. Father Baumhofer led in the organization of the group.

• Just forty-five years to the day after residents of Johnsburg were shocked to learn that St. John's church was destroyed by fire, a similar tragedy occurred in that community when the parochial school burned to the ground. (Note: The first occurred on February 18, 1900.)

• March — With the idea of saving the last available river front property within the city limits for park purposes, the City Council took options on three lots known as the Weber property.

• After a stormy GOP session a few weeks previous, it was decided that delegates would go to the Seventeenth Judicial District Convention uninstructed.

• In May local residents joined with people throughout the nation in observing V-E Day. All stores closed and the hearts of everyone became lighter in the knowledge that many of our boys would be coming home.

• McHenry once more began to glitter on May 9 when the ban on outside electric lighting was lifted.

• The local Legion post voted their endorsement of an auxiliary, which was organized on Friday, July 13.

• July 29, the Johnsburg community held a one-day carnival, proceeds going toward erecting a new parochial school to replace the one that burned in the preceding winter.

• The Park Pub, on the old brewery corner, opened its doors to the public in September.

• McHenry followed the example of Chicago in remaining on daylight saving time throughout October even though most of the nation returned to standard time at the close of September.

• Friday, Oct. 26, became V-8 Day as the new Ford, first 1946 car to be shown, was on display at Buss Motor Sales showroom.

• Hurricane winds reaching 80 mph caused severe damage just three miles southeast of McHenry on November 12th, when several barns were blown down.

• The first telephone strike in McHenry's history tied up the city conversationally. Only emergency calls were being put through.

Local youngsters are shown enjoying a sleigh ride in the early 1940's. Shown left to right are: Bob Smith, Henry Buch, Paul Freund, Esther Freund Meyers, Doris Freund Smith, Virginia Freund Doherty (in back), Barbara Freund Gilpin, Marilyn Schmitt, Dolores Schmitt Brennan, Bernice Smith Diedrich, Carol Freund, Joan Freund, Dick Schmitt and Clarence Freund. The old Pearl Street Park Gazebo is in the background.

1946

• Earl Dowell was appointed new chief of police in McHenry as the City Council reorganized the police force in February. John J. McCarthy and Peter Wirfs were named to the other two offices as the force was expanded to include three policemen.

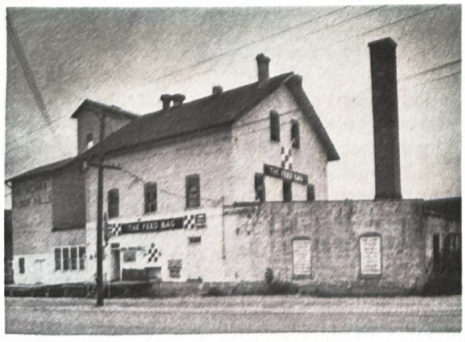
• Representatives from each McHenry ward and members of the City Council formed a library board to select a suitable location for the public library.

• On March 1st the West McHenry State Bank, for convenience sake, dropped the West and became known as the McHenry State Bank. The bank also observed its fortieth birthday during the year.

West McHenry State Bank on the north side of Main Street.

• An election to vote on the consolidation of the McHenry Grade, Prairie School, Griswold Lake and Emerald Park school districts occurred on July 27, with the majority of voters in favor of the proposition.

• In Sept., the McHenry Flour Mill, in the Spencer family since 1906 and owned by William Spencer for twenty-six years, was sold to William Meath of Chicago.



Old McHenry Flour Mill on the corner of Crystal Lake Road and Main Street.

Overton's Garage built and designed by Hank Tonyan in the late 1940's. The old Park Hotel (a City Landmark) was torn down to construct the building.

• The Nook restaurant opened in the beautiful, spacious basement of the Wattles building in West McHenry, with the most modern equipment.

• At a meeting of the High School Board of Education on Nov. 12, a conditional contract was entered into for sale of $295,000 worth of bonds at an interest rate of approximately 2.45 percent, the money to be used for additional building facilities.

• On December 14, McHenry residents went to the polls and expressed themselves in favor of the $295,000 school bond issue.

1947

• After a period of seven months, during which time the McHenry Public Library was closed, it reopened on Jan. 29, with quarters in the City Hall.

• Beautiful new Bernardian chimes were installed at St. Mary's church in April. And in May, a slogan contest to select a suitable title describing McHenry was announced by the newly formed McHenry Business Men's Association.

• Also in May, thirteen million dollars was the amount estimated in a State survey as the cost of providing a four-foot channel, navigable for small boats, through the Fox River as part of a program designed to make the valley an even greater recreational area.

• The McHenry Roller Rink reopened in June with a skating surface of 10,000 feet.

• August — Flames of undetermined origin destroyed the large main barn on Frank Howard's Hickory Creek Farm at McCullom Lake.

• It was announced that Admiral Radio Corp. had purchased the Kaiser Frazier building on Elm street in West McHenry and would open for business early in the new year.

• The Park Hotel, an old landmark in West McHenry, was torn down in Sept. to make room for a new garage to be erected by R. I. Overton.

• The high school Trades Class boys began construction of a new home on Center Street, to be sold at public auction upon completion.

• Conway's Woods was purchased by the V.F.W. for use in building a club house.

The Carey Appliance float shown during the 1948 Marine Days Parade.

• October — The Mothers Club and Library Board made extensive plans for a series of four programs to be presented for the purpose of raising funds for a new library.

• McHenry joined the nation in observing its first "meatless Tuesday" on Oct. 7.

• State and national skating champions came to McHenry for an exhibition at the local rink in November.

1948

• On January 1, the fifth change in ownership of the McHenry Plaindealer was recorded since the paper was put into existence 72 years prior, with A. H. Mosher becoming publisher.

• The telephone company's business office was moved from 102 Park Avenue to 136 N. Riverside Drive.

• February — Members of the Lutheran Church announced plans for a drive for funds so that a parsonage might be erected.

• Public opinion was mounting in March when what was scheduled as the last meeting on the school reorganization project ended in a deadlock. The large assembled crowd failed to agree on the main issues up for discussion.

• The Lily Lake School District, through petition, was joined to the McHenry Consolidation District No. 15.

• Impressive rites marked dedication of the new V.F.W. clubhouse on Sunday, May 30th.

• In June, an announcement was made by the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad president that a second morning train between McHenry and Chicago would be granted for the winter.

The Althoff Hardware float shown in the 1948 Marine Days Parade.

• The $185,000 bond issue for an addition to the high school met with little interest and carried 63 in favor and 13 against.

• A record crowd of nearly 900 persons witnessed the McHenry Choral Club's presentation of "Plantation Party."

• Although history was made when the nation, contrary to all predictions, went strongly Democratic on Nov. 2, McHenry Township remained in the Republican columns.

• During this year a new subdivision, known as A. P. Freund's Millstream Addition, was accepted by the city of McHenry.

• Riverview Camp, Royal Neighbors, was hostess to county camps at the thirty-third annual convention.

• The newly formed McHenry Medical Group announed its opening in the recently completed building on Green street.

• Fifty-eight ladies signed the charter for the new Parent-Teachers Association of the consolidated grade and high schools.

• By a vote of almost 7 to 1, McHenry residents favored the erection of a new consolidated grade school building, in the south part of the city.

1949

• Winter's worst storm hit McHenry on Jan. 27, causing great damage when more than 1,000 lines were brought down by ice-weighted lines. A total of 120 lines were down in McHenry alone.

• In March, a thrilling episode took place in a Green Street store when Clarence L. Gilbert, 22, a Wisconsin state penitentiary escaped convict, was captured by Police Chief Bacon on a tip from Cecil Ballowe.

• George P. Freund became the new mayor of McHenry as the result of the city election April 19. Earl R. Walsh was named city clerk, James E. Larkin, city treasurer, Charles W. Vycital, William Althoff and Albert S. Blake aldermen.

• In a most impressive ceremony, the new Green Street bridge was dedicated on Friday evening, May 20, opening a thoroughfare which had been closed for nine months.

• In July, work began on the new District 12 (Johnsburg) Public Grade School, the price being $182,000.

• Nov. 13 was a gala day for the McHenry Legion Post No. 491. It not only marked the dedication of the new Legion Home but also recalled thirty years since the founding of the post.

• The McHenry Hosiery Mill opened for business on Dec. 8, turning out 1,000 nylon stockings daily. The local mill was recorded as being one of three in the state.

1950

• January — Open house in the first addition to the McHenry High School (now East Campus) led several hundred citizens through one of the most modern educational structures in northern Illinois. The Consolidated Grade School was still under construction at the time.

• June — To keep the city free from unsightly structures during a period of building boom, the City Council passed a zoning ruling.

• Later in the year, in order to regulate traffic as well as provide extra revenue, the Council decided on parking meters.

• The year 1950 saw a new fire house erected at Wonder Lake. It was also the year that Island Lake became incorporated.

1950 Marine Days Queen Float. The Army duck was sponsored by A.P. Freund and Sons.

1951

• The Business Men's Association conducted a campaign for paper and scrap metal, proceeds to be put toward the purchase of modern street lights.

• The Tesch property was purchased at the corner of Main and Green Streets for the purpose of building a new library. A landmark since 1840, the property was purchased for $4,700.

• July 1 — McHenry became the home of a first class post office. Ratings were based upon receipts per calendar year. At the time, receipts had to reach and be maintained at $40,000, in order to qualify.

• In the fall Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church observed its Diamond Anniversary.

• The year ended on the sad note that there were more casualties in the Korean War thus far than in the first full year of World War II.

Vycital's Hardware float shown in the 1949 Marine Days Parade.

1952

• Many folks will remember 1952 as the time the penny post card became two cents for the second time since it was first used in the U.S. in 1873.

• The summer of that year found drownings taking their toll of life in the Fox River. So numerous were deaths in this manner that the City Council and other organizations took action to maintain a lifeguard at the beach.

• The Council also heard plans for a new subdivision south of the city, and later in the year approved the annexation of Edgebrook Heights.

• It was in 1952 that traffic at the intersection of Green Street and Rt. 120 became regulated by means other than a police officer, with four-way traffic signs being installed.

• McCullom Lake made a bid for incorporation, a bid which lost favor at the polls by a vote of 155 to 126.

• Educational needs continued to be met as St. Patrick's new school was dedicated on Oct. 26.

• For many people, 1952 would best be remembered as the year Dwight Eisenhower was elected president.

1953

• February — Boy Scouts in McHenry made elaborate plans for the observance of Forty-Third Scout Week. The youths were appointed to hold various civic posts for a day on Saturday, February 14.

• Early in the year the Chamber of Commerce, which replaced the Business Men's Association, voted to change store hours, with a recommendation that they be closed Wednesdays instead of Thursdays.

• May 11 — The Methodist Church held a kick-off meeting on their building fund drive.

The gazebo in Pearl Street Park in the early 1900's.

• June — Msgr. Nix, pastor of St. Mary's Parish for the past 32 years, observed his Golden Jubilee as a priest, and a grotto was dedicated on the church grounds.

• Four new voting precincts were added to McHenry Township, bringing the total number to ten.

• The Atlantic & Pacific announced the opening of a new store on Elm Street the latter part of June.

• A crowd of 15,000 witnessed the beautiful parade and thrilling boat races of Marine Day festivities in August.

• September — A giant young people's rally for the Channel 11 educational television station was held on the high school football field, with TV personality, Uncle Johnny Coons, presiding over activities.

• A small vote of 160 to 45 favored the $55,000 bond issue for the erection of new and modern street lights in the business section.

• The possibility of a new hospital was discussed at a citizens' meeting in the fall, a dream which was soon to become a reality.

• The Grade School Board of Education made plans for an addition to the Edgebrook School, which had already become overcrowded. In October an announcement was made that $210,000 in bonds would be sold to pay for the new addition.

• Carpenters' Local No. 2087 held its first annual County Carpenters' Conference in McHenry in October. This was the first time in the history of the Union that such a conference had been conducted.

1954

• It was in 1954 that McHenry was assured a new fire house when the public voted overwhelmingly in favor by a vote of 432 to 23. The $60,000 bond issue was approved in Feb. and called for a new structure and equipment.

• Club After Glo, scene of McHenry's first post prom party, was a success, with 100 couples in attendance.

• Members and friends of the McHenry Country Club were enjoying the beautiful, new $115,000 building recently completed.

• Progress continued at a rapid pace, and residents who lived through a movie-less period after fire destroyed the local theatre were happy to learn that they were assured a new one with announcement that $100,000 necessary to proceed with the plans was subscribed and a charter granted by the State.

1955

• 1955 was the year McHenry residents saw a new fire house dedicated and the opening of a new theatre.

• A new bridge was built near Edgebrook School on Green Street.

• At the telephone office, four new switchboards were installed to increase the capacity of the office by 300 phones.

• Although still only in the planning stages, a definite move to establish a Park District was undertaken by the Chamber of Commerce.

• Salk vaccine was approved and local doctors joined to administer shots to 600 first and second graders.

• The first election in the newly incorporated Village of McCullom Lake was held in spring.

• Construction continued with an announcement that among the newest structures would be the McHenry Hospital and a new Zion Lutheran Church.

• During the year, the public approved a $630,000 bond issue for the erection of a new Junior High School. Voters also gave approval of a $1,250,000 bond issue for an addition to the present high school (East Campus).

This first picture is a street scene of Green Street looking south. The building on the left is now occupied by China Light Restaurant. Below, the Number 9 Green at the McHenry Country Club in the early 1920's.

1956

• In the interest of halting law violations, the City saw the formation of Crime Stoppers for youngsters from 7 through 12.

• A new sewage plant addition was started during the year to meet the needs of a growing population, which numbered 2,748 in a special census taken in February.

• Other indications of growth and the necessity for keeping pace were noted with work started on an addition to the local high school and the near completion of the Junior High structure (on Kane Avenue).

• The year also saw the erection of the city's first hospital, which opened in the early fall.

• The fall also saw the completion of an all-summer project to widen Elm Street.

• Prospects of future progress came with word that Illinois Bell had purchased a site for a dial telephone building.

• A new church, St. Paul's Episcopal, became a part of McHenry during the year and one new organization, the Kiwanis Club, held charter night activities.

• As a result of a heavy November vote at the polls, it was decided McHenry was in need of three new precincts.

• Good news to motorists was announcement that electric signs were assured for two intersections — at the corner of Green and Elm, and at the corner of Elm and Richmond Road.

1957

• Drivers learned that the City Council had arranged for 64 new parking meters on Elm Street from Richmond Road to Riverside Drive.

• The public was informed that $150,000 locks would be installed at the McHenry Dam.

• McHenry found itself in a different judicial district as a result of numerous changes in the State.

• Taxpayers learned that the assessed valuation in the county had risen and McHenry was second high among the townships.

1958

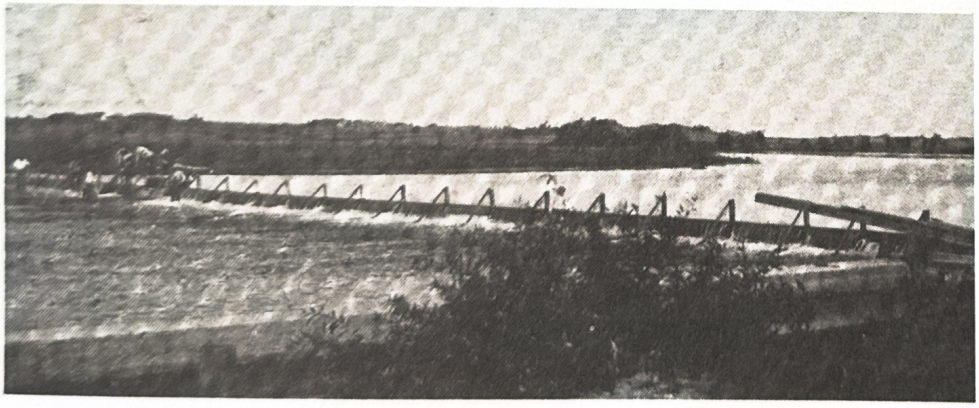
• Early in the year it was announced that one of the community's largest factories, Admiral, was stopping all operations in the city March 15. However, in August, Trolex Corp. leased the 32,000 square foot building.

• A third electric signal light was assured in March when a contract was awarded to install traffic lights at the corner of Riverside Drive and Elm Street.

• The year 1958 was noted for church expansion, St. Paul's Episcopal Church was dedicated April 16. A newly formed Alliance Bible Church purchased the former Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church building on John Street as the latter congregation planned for dedication services in their new, modern church on Rt. 120, west of the city.

• Ground was broken in the spring for the new dial phone building, and in the fall, an impressive cornerstone sealing ceremony was held at the southwest corner of Court and Pearl.

• It was a year of continuing school expansion. In September, ground breaking ceremonies on the site of the new Marian Central Catholic High School in Woodstock were held. The same month, the McHenry Community High School athletic field was dedicated McCracken Field as a lasting tribute to the school's long time coach and athletic director, Leonard McCracken.



The old McHenry Dam on the Fox River at the present McHenry State Park Dam site, c. 1916.

• School enrollment leaped once again in 1957 and, for the first time topped 3,000, including 830 in the High School, 340 in Junior High and 1,100 in Edgebrook.

• Another religious congregation was formed as those of the Presbyterian faith gathered for their first Sunday service in the barn at Eastwood Manor.

• Youth groups went forward in their activities with the establishment of Job's Daughters and the reorganization of the Girl Scouts into one large council.

• On north Green Street, the old Miller homestead was destroyed in July to make room for the new and spacious post office which would open the following year.

• Probably the most unusual, unpleasant and costly occurrence of the year for the greatest number of people was the unexpected hurricane which swept through the community in early October. Numerous trees were uprooted, cars and parts of homes smashed as they fell, and a widespread power shut-off continued for 36 hours.

1959

• Early in the year the Consolidated Board of Education, No. 15, announced the need of fourteen additional classrooms and would ask the public to approve a bond issue.

• Illinois Bell Telephone Company filed a tariff asking the Illinois Commerce Commission to allow it to discontinue offering four-party residence phone service to new customers or to present customers who moved to new locations.

• A new church, the Mount Hope Methodist, began regular services at Pistakee Highlands.

• In February, Dr. William A. Nye was named chief of staff of Memorial Hospital for McHenry County by the board of directors.

• After almost forty-eight hours of sleet and snow, which played havoc with power and telephone lines and poles, many sections of the McHenry area were without phone service and electric power.

• The post office moved from its place of business on Riverside Drive to its new home in the beautiful building on North Green Street.

• Dedication services were held at the new Alliance Bible Church at 408 John Street.

• Then in March, the congregation of Faith Presbyterian Church completed plans to move into its first church home near the corner of Johnsburg and Lincoln Roads in Eastwood Manor.

• The telephone business office moved into its new quarters in the newly constructed telephone building at 111 North Court Street.

• Gov. William G. Stratton was a guest of the McHenry County Republicans at a "GOP Fun Day" held at the McHenry Country Club in June.

• The second annual Fiesta Day was held in the city in July with a colorful parade and Drum Corps Magic held at McCracken Field.

• August 30th was dial day in McHenry. At 2 a.m. the first local and long distance calls were made through the new dial telephone system.

• September saw School District 15 accept a design for a new school to be built northeast of Eastwood Manor.

Richard Hester (on the right) and his son shown with their home in the background as it was damaged in the 1959 tornado. This home was located at the intersection of Timothy and Clover.

Destruction of homes in Edgebrook Heights during the tornado of October 8, 1959.

• A tornado dipped to the ground about 4:50 p.m. on October 8th in the Edgebrook Heights area, destroying portions of several homes and causing thousands of dollars in property damage. Fortunately no one was seriously injured.

• As 1959 drew to a close, plans for the Mental Health Center for McHenry County were developing swiftly. The official opening was set for Jan. 11, 1960. It would be located at 105 East Waukegan Road.

Picture of newly constructed McHenry Locks which were officially opened on May 29, 1960 by Governor William Stratton.

1960

• The worst blizzard in 25 years struck the McHenry area in February, blocking roads, closing schools and virtually stopping traffic for two days.

• Weather conditions continued to make news when in April, 159 to 200 people were evacuated from their homes as flood waters reached record highs.

• The McHenry Publishing Co. announced in April that it had purchased the Harrison building at 405 W. Elm Street, which would become the new home of the McHenry Plaindealer.

• May brought "Operation Alert" day which was observed in McHenry in connection with Civil Defense.

• Riverside Drive stores opened Monday nights to give shoppers an extra shopping night.

• McHenry residents gathered at the dam, southeast of the city on May 29th to watch Gov. William Stratton cut the ribbon which officially put into operation the new navigation lock on the Fox River.

• Ground was broken in July for a new eighteen-bed building with a maternity department to be built as an addition to the McHenry Hospital.

• In October, the School Board of District 15 approved bids for construction of a ten-room school, (Valley View), to be built west of the city. In November open house was held in the newly completed Hilltop School, northeast of the city.

• Rev. Fr. Eugene Baumhofer was installed Dec. 6 as pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church, replacing the late Msgr. Charles Nix.

1961

• Political news started early in January with announcement by Mayor George P. Freund that he would not seek re-election after serving the city in one capacity or another for a quarter of a century.

• Early in February, Mayor Freund urged development of the Boone Creek area for shopping and the close of the year found this in progress.

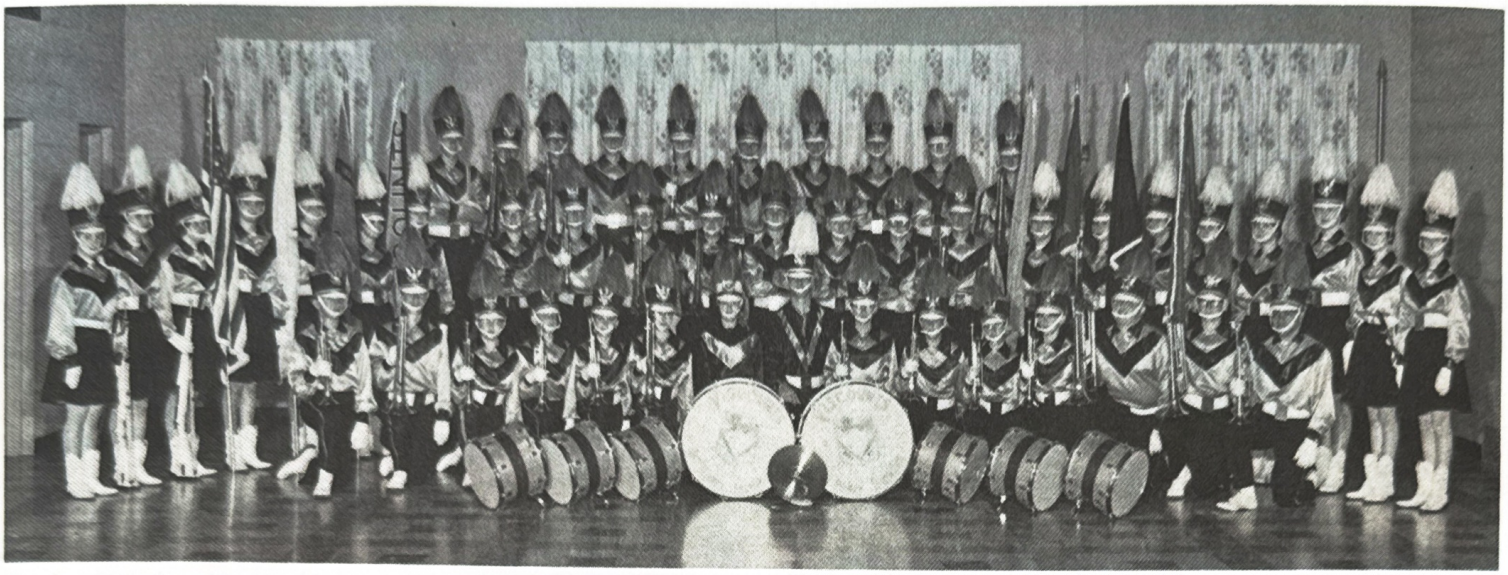
• Two good sized industrial plants announced intentions of locating in McHenry — Rae Motors and Modine Manufacturing.

• In May the city lost its spherical gas storage holder on south Green Street, a landmark since 1928, when it became of no further use.

• June brought a return to McHenry of a Baptist Church with the opening of the First Baptist Chapel on Main Street.

• Signs of an endeavor to meet the changing needs of a growing population were evidenced in a decision of the county board to approve eight new precincts for McHenry Township.

◀ *The Landmark School faculty in 1960 is shown seated left to right: Dorothy Arvidson, Alice Clark, Robert Putnam, Mrs. Rortvet, and Mary Vycital. Standing are Aileen Claybough, Leta Clark and Mrs. Pytco.*



The 1961 Viscounts National Drum and Bugle Corps Champions from McHenry, shown in the American Legion Hall on Green Street, now occupied by the McHenry Savings Bank.

• The big news of July, 1961 was celebration of the city's 125th Anniversary, a week marked by observances of various kinds. It was also at this time that the city became possessor of its first flag, an attractive orange and black banner bearing the words "City of Progress".

• While July brought a State winner to McHenry in the person of Patricia Hogan as Dairy Princess, August found the Viscounts Drum and Bugle Corps named State winners in the Sons of the Legion competition, and later national champs.

• Later in the year another good sized industry came to McHenry with the opening of a branch of Anderson Controls, Inc., in the old Admiral building.

• December brought to the city its first Christmas Parade, a line of march which brought out 4,000 kiddies and their parents to watch the arrival of Santa.

1962

• The month of January, 1962, is probably best remembered for snow — amounts which established records and cut down considerably on anything but necessary activities.

• The big news of February centered around action of the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, which made itself known throughout the county when it revoked licenses in great numbers of those holding federal tax stamps for gambling and gambling machines.

• The Fox River went on a rampage in March, enveloping many homes in the area so that they were impossible to reach except by boat.

• The April School Board election brought out an unprecedented vote of 2,500.

• McHenry's first foreign exchange student, Carlos Ribas, arrived from Argentina to start a year in the local school in August, and made himself a part of the family of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Liebman.

• In September, schools opened their doors to a record high enrollment of 4,610.

• The City Council passed an ordinance to annex land south of the city and west of Route 31, a large portion to be used for industrial park sites. During this same time, daily commuters on the Northwestern railway found themselves seeking other transportation or enjoying an enforced vacation while the railroad was on strike.

• October was "Chuck" Hiller Month in all of McHenry County, and Johnsburg folks were the proudest in the nation as their hometown boy made a grand slam home run for the Giants, the first one ever hit by a National League player in World Series competition.

• November was proclaimed Library Fund Drive Month, when a goal of $40,000 was set in order to construct an addition to the local library.

• November was also the month that fluoridation equipment was installed in the new city water plant.

• December marked the biggest promotion ever conducted at Christmas by local businessmen, featuring a trip to Florida for two.

1963

• In January, Frank Low was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce.

• McHenry was experiencing extremely cold weather with the mercury falling to 24 degrees below zero.

• North Bridge Marine Firm was burglarized and the safe containing $147 was carried away.

• For the first time, a large variety of evening courses for adults was offered at the local high school.

• In February, approval was made by the Junior College committee of the county for a survey in this area to determine the need for such a school. The cost of the survey, to be made by members of the faculty at Northern Illinois University, was expected to reach $6,000.

The first graduating class from McHenry Community High School in 1928.

• Two employees of the Clark Service Station on West Elm Street were missing and so was $776.86 in a mystery which produced few answers for police.

• Herbert Reihansperger was elected president of the Rotary. Also in March, a sewage plant survey revealed sufficient capacity to serve predicted population to 1985.

• In April elections, Walter Dean of Wonder Lake was elected new supervisor in McHenry Township as head of the Progressive Party ticket along with Edward J. Buss of McHenry and Thomas Huemann of Johnsburg as assistant supervisors.

• The City of McHenry held open house in the newly remodeled city hall, the public library and the water treatment plant.

• The Chamber of Commerce board voted in favor of the establishment of one-acre sites for the new industrial park south on Route 31.

• May saw the City Council approve the petition and passage of an ordinance annexing the Baptist Church property to the city. This location being on the west side of Rt. 31, where the new church was under construction.

• A surprise mock airplane crash south of McHenry provided a fine test for Civil Defense in the community. The Harold Morris property along Rt. 31 was selected as site of the simulated crash.

• The unwholesome condition of the Fox River during the summer destroyed the recreational qualities of this outstanding natural attraction, and resulted in widespread interest.

• The City Council approved the plans of a new subdivision to be known as Tonyan's Millstream Park Addition.

• The new fire house for Station 2 of the McHenry Township Fire Protection District at Johnsburg was dedicated July 28th.

• August — The McHenry Red Devils brought home the Governor's Trophy and $1,000 for winning first place among senior drum and bugle corps at the Springfield Fair. The corps is sponsored by the McHenry VFW.

• Later in the year Hornsby's Five Cent to a Dollar store opened for business in the old National Tea building on Elm Street.

• Mrs. Dorothy McEachren was named head of the newly organized McHenry County Historical Society.

• The City Council purchased a second car in December to be used in policing the city.

• In a county referendum, the proposed Junior College for McHenry County was defeated by a 3 to 1 margin.

Green Street in 1915, looking north with City Hall building on the left.

1964

• The Chamber of Commerce elected Clint Claypool president in January. The City Council voted to construct a new bridge across the creek at North Avenue.

• Ground was broken for a spacious new building of the Illinois Coil Spring Co. on a twenty-seven acre plot located north of Rt. 120 on the land near Zion Lutheran Church.

• In April the Rotary Club assumed the task of collecting the $10,000 necessary for construction of the new library addition. Harry Dean was named chairman.

• Before the largest crowd ever to hear a local concert, the new band shell erected in the city park was dedicated.

• July — McHenry's corporate boundary lines were continuing to move out to include more area. Two petitions for annexation were brought to the City Council. A delegation of property owners from the Cooney Heights area presented a petition signed by property owners in a triangular area bounded by Crystal Lake Road and Lillian Street. A petition to annex approx. 25 acres of the Engdahl property along Green Street south of the city was approved.

• A new foreign exchange student, Antonio Carmona, arrived in August from Madrid, Spain, to spend the school year with the Walter Carlson family.

• Contracts for the new addition to the McHenry Hospital were awarded and work started on the erection of a three-story building.

• November — A 1926 Peter Pirsch fire truck was presented to the city as a museum piece to be placed in the city park.

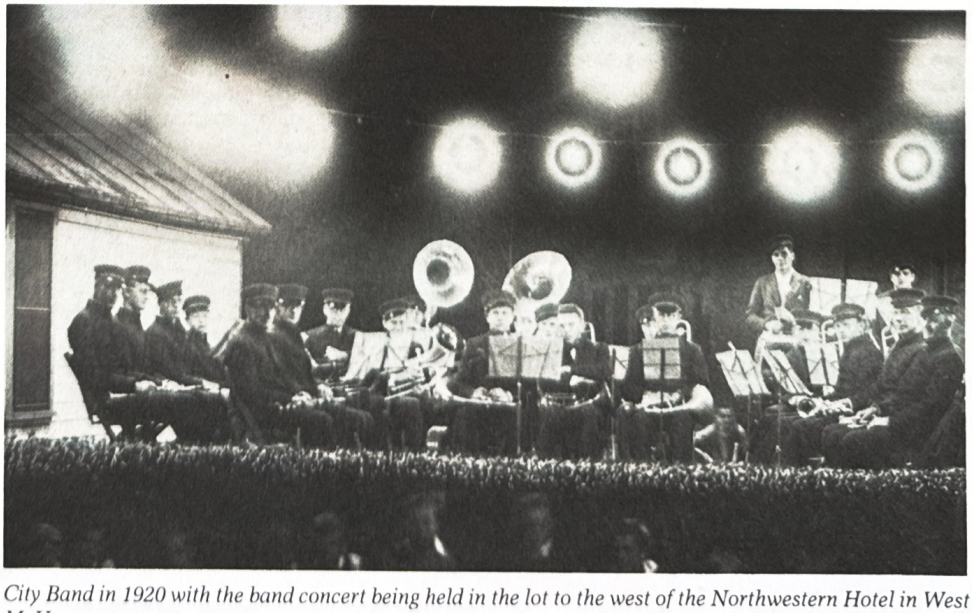
• In December elections, and by a vote of a little less than 3 to 1, the $675,000 referendum to provide additional facilities for children in Consolidated Grade School District 15 won approval by voters. Success of the bond issue would finance construction of additions to Hilltop, Valley View and Edgebrook schools.

• Construction work on the city's newest sewer project began on James Street and extended into Cooney Heights area. Among the many construction projects in the city was the changing of parking on Green Street from a 45 degree angle to a 35 degree angle. The new system provided an additional 5 feet of space for travel on this congested street.

• Sixteen Boy Scouts from Lakeland Park and four adult leaders completed a 114.8 mile hike to Starved Rock.

• Postmaster LeRoy Smith announced the new postal five-digit ZIP code is 60050.

• Gusts of wind at high velocity, accompanied by a beating rain and hail tore through McHenry June 27th about 6:30 and within an hour had wrought havoc with power lines and trees.



City Band in 1920 with the band concert being held in the lot to the west of the Northwestern Hotel in West McHenry.

1965

• January — The newly remodeled library was dedicated at a program held in the high school, followed by open house at the library.

• The Zoning Board of Appeals, the McHenry Planning Commission and the City Council studied a proposed amendment to the city ordinance concerning the planned unit development to be known as Boone Valley which would be located on the Crystal Lake Blacktop Road.

• McHenry became a beautiful winter wonderland of crystal as motorists and pedestrians were battling one of the worst ice storms in many years.

• The city created a new fourth ward in February, in an attempt to make the wards as even as possible in regard to population, at the same time taking into consideration the areas in which there was expected to be the greatest growth.

• The McHenry High School Board reported its acceptance of the High School Advisory Council's recommendation for a new high school. The proposed school would be located on the site of the Martin J. Cooney property adjoining the City of McHenry on the Crystal Lake Blacktop Road.

• In March, a veteran's organization new to McHenry was in the process of being activated here. It was the National Fraternal AMVETS.

• On Palm Sunday, April 11, a devastating tornado hit the Crystal Lake, BayView Beach and Island Lake areas destroying hundreds of homes and businesses and killing six people.

• The Rev. Donald Johnson and his family arrived in McHenry in May to begin work as pastor of what was to become Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church.

• At a special meeting of the City Council, an ordinance was adopted annexing approximately 600 acres of land known as Boone Valley to the City of McHenry.

• August — The City Council passed an ordinance to annex the third Hanley addition to the city.

• In October, Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago-based educational publishing company, announced plans for the gradual phase-out of its material handling center near McHenry.

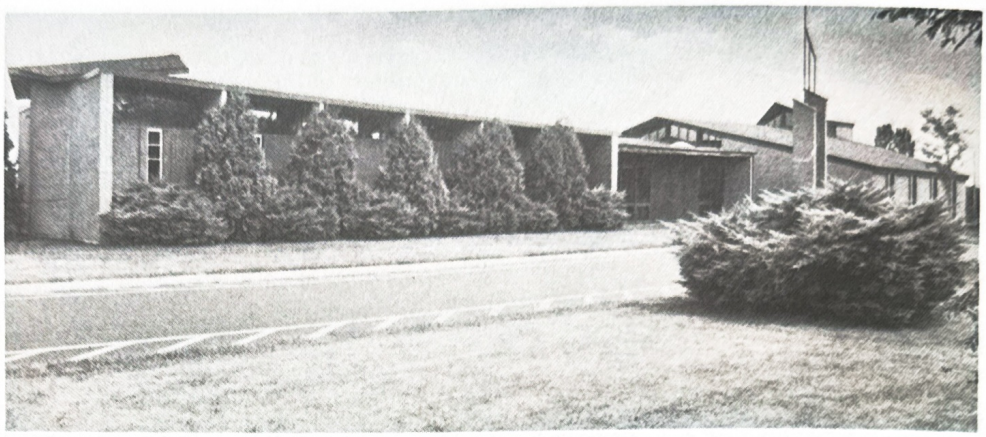
• Unhappy news came to residents of the west part of the city with a notice to the effect that the lease of the West McHenry Post Station had terminated and the office would be closed November 11.

• A total of 2,386 voters supported referendum for erection of a new high school.

• Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church was dedicated December 5.

• For the second year Santa Claus came to stay in his hut located in the city park where he greeted the McHenry area children daily.

• Christmas, 1965, would be remembered by employees of utility companies working the McHenry area. It would also long be remembered by residents of homes without electrical power Christmas Eve and into the next day as a heavy, wet snow storm struck the area.



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, dedicated in 1965, located on Green Street, c. 1970.

1966

• In the first meeting of the new year, the City Council passed and approved an ordinance annexing approximately 38 acres of land on the westerly edge of the city. Tentative plans for the development of the new area were to use six acres fronting on Illinois Highway 120 for a commercial shopping area and the balance for industrial sites.

• February — George P. Freund was elected head of the enlarged Board of Directors of McHenry Hospital.

• A large group of Front Street residents protested possible annexation to McHenry at the City Council meeting.

• Earl R. Walsh was elected president of the McHenry Rotary Club.

• In April, a total of 1,372 voters went to the polls in Johnsburg's School District 12 to approve a building program which would include a new school.

• The following month ground was broken for a new shopping center located at 4400 W. Route 120, to be known as McHenry Market Place.

• Members of Faith Presbyterian Church in McHenry launched a campaign for building a new church.

• Initial steps toward annexation to the City of McHenry were taken May 18 with the filing of a petition in Circuit Court by all four units of Lakeland Park and three units of Lakeland Shores.

• Thousands of people toured the new addition to the McHenry Hospital. Through the $1½ million building program the hospital boasted 137 beds.

• McHenry's Loyal Order of Moose was making plans for a new lodge building on the northeast corner of the intersection of Ringwood and Martin Roads.

• Tornadic winds and an electrical storm hit McHenry July 11, and did extensive damage. On Rt. 120, the A&W Root Beer Stand was completely demolished.

• The City Council voted to purchase radar equipment to help control speeding.

• The McHenry Plaindealer changed its complete printing operation to offset. The first paper was printed Sept. 15.

• On Sept. 26 ground was broken and construction begun on the new church building of Faith Presbyterian Church at the corner of Lincoln and Chapel Hill Roads.

• Zion Lutheran Church of McHenry observed the Ninetieth Anniversary of its organization.

• At a special meeting of the board of High School District 156 in October, members unanimously voted to change a prior decision concerning the new high school and to assign juniors and seniors to the new building.

• Republicans scored sweeping victories in the Nov. 8 election. All county Republican candidates were elected.

• The new McHenry Market Place located at 4400 W. Rt. 120, within the corporate boundaries of the city, opened for business on November 16.

• A McHenry physician, Dr. Clayton W. Klontz, was initiated in the Fifty-Year Club of the Illinois State Medical Society after completing a half century of medical practice.

• 1966 came to a close as the City Council voted to approve the annexation of the Lakeland Park - Lakeland Shores area as defined in petition.

The Route 120 Bridge over the Fox River looking westerly in the early 1930's.

1967

• January — Contracts totalling $3,355,546.25 were let by the Board of School District 156 in preparation for the start of construction on the new high school on the Crystal Lake blacktop. Later in the month, a raging blizzard struck McHenry dumping about a foot of snow causing blocked roads and closed schools.

• In April, Junior College District won voters' favor with 5,780 yes and 3,614 no votes cast within the county.

• A violent tornado roared out of the skies April 21 about 4:30 p.m. and caused millions of dollars damage in Belvidere, Woodstock and McHenry. The greatest loss in the McHenry area was at Gearmaster, Inc., 1609 S. Rt. 31, where about 50 percent of the building was destroyed. At nearby Schroeder Metal Craft the new, modern building escaped with only the need for roofing to be replaced.

• Flames raged through three of the four large buildings comprising the McHenry Lumber Co. on May 7. The estimated damage was listed around $200,000. It was thought by firemen that one of the buildings had been struck by lightning.

• On May 21 the McHenry Post, No. 491 of the American Legion formally dedicated its attractive new home and grounds on Ringwood Road.

• McHenry Savings and Loan Association celebrated the completion of their new quarters with a grand opening celebration June 3. The loan company is located in the old Legion Home on Green Street.

• June — The annexations of some 380 acres bounded by Route 120 and Draper Road, left "islands" surrounded by the city. Such conditions not being considered conducive to good planning and affording services, the City Council took action to annex the areas.

• October — The McHenry Plaindealer printed its first semi-weekly paper on Oct. 4.

• Later in October, the new Spurgeons store opened for business in the McHenry Market Place.

• November notes indicate that Pheasant Valley was the name of 320 acres annexed to the city. The area is bounded by Rt. 120 and Draper Road.

The American Legion Home located on Green Street in the 1950's is now the site of the McHenry Savings Bank.

1968

• Among the highlights of the news in March, 1968, we note the following. Students from McHenry High School sent a 14 foot telegram to President Johnson and Congressman McClory expressing their concern over "apparent lack of firm action on the part of the administration to deal positively with the North Korean government for the immediate release of the Pueblo", which they deemed "disgraceful to our American Heritage."

• Also in March annuals — by unanimous vote of the County Board of School Trustees, Ringwood School District 34 was consolidated with Johnsburg School District 12.

• April — A new national bank was chartered for McHenry, to be known as The First National Bank of McHenry.

• On June 29, the wrath of Mother Nature was unleashed upon McHenry and the surrounding area accompanied by winds, estimated at more than 70 miles per hour velocity. About 25 trees were uprooted and countless limbs dotted the landscape. Many areas were without electric service for almost three days.

• September saw a crowd of nearly 1,500 persons gather to hear Senator Everett Dirksen speak at the dedication of the new West Campus High School.

1969

• February — The Chamber of Commerce established its first business office at 3717 W. Elm Street.

• McHenry's City Council moved toward solving the drainage problem through Lakeland Park by authorizing an expenditure estimated not to exceed $2,000 for preliminary engineering.

• The Girl Scouts of Valley View Neighborhood honored Mrs. Stuart Engh, who was celebrating her Twenty-year Anniversary in Girl Scouting.

• March 15 marked the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the American Legion. The McHenry Post 491 observed the occasion with a dinner and dance at the Post Home.

• September files indicate that extensive damage was done to the hall, kitchen and the main floor of St. Patrick's Catholic Church by fire.

• McHenry veterans of two World Wars and two more recent conflicts marched in commemoration of the very first Armistice Day fifty-one years prior. An appropriate program was held in the city park.

• The beautiful new addition to the city hall was viewed by about 400 persons at an open house held in November. Later the same month, the new First National Bank at 3814 W. Elm Street was opened to the public.

McHenry City Hall was remodeled in 1969 on the site of the old City Hall premises on Green Street.

The George Justen Furniture Store located on the southwest corner of Green and Elm Streets burned down on April 24, 1969. It is now the site of the Elf Company commercial building.

• In an early morning fire, April 24, the Justen Furniture building on the corner of Elm and Green Streets was completely destroyed.

• Open house was held for the newly renovated St. Mary's Church in May.

• Later that year a schoolhouse of 1894 vintage regained proud standing in the community as work on the restoration of the Landmark edifice neared completion.

• A portable, no-left-turn sign was put in use Aug. 22 between the hours of 11 a.m. and 2:30 pm. and 3:30 and 5 p.m. to better regulate traffic in the heart of the Green Street business area.

• In December, seven contracts for building construction of the new Junior High School on Ringwood Road were approved by the Board of Consolidated Grade School District 15.

1970

• A bizarre puzzle of murder and intrigue unfolded in 1970, the scope of which had never before been focused on our community. The string of events are first mentioned in January.

• Mrs. Jean Irene Bianchi, 27, of Woodlawn Park was found stabbed and beaten to death in any icy creek about 4 miles south of McHenry near the Pearson farm. She had been missing since January 27 when she disappeared after doing her laundry at the Suds & Duds Laundromat, 3406 W. Elm Street about 10:30 p.m.

• Then in May the body of Jean Ann Lingenfelter, 17, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Lingenfelter, was taken from the waters of McCullom lake. She had been murdered. Mark Smith of McHenry was charged with her death.

• The following month, Mark A. Smith of McHenry, in a loud, clear voice, pleaded "not guilty" when he was arraigned before Judge William M. Carroll in Circuit Court June 17.

• However, in December, Mark pleaded guilty to the murders of Jean Ann Lingenfelter on May 28 and Jean Irene Bianchi on Jan. 28, both of McHenry, and also of Mrs. Obie Faye Ash of Mountain Home, Ark. Judge William Carroll sentenced him to the state penitentiary for not less than 199 and not more than 200 years for the Lingenfelter and Bianchi murders, the terms to run consecutively. He would be sentenced separately for the Arkansas murder.

• We break format here to continue this account which next appears in July, 1971 recap. Mark A. Smith, 22, who had previously been sentenced for the murders of the three women as noted above, received his fourth prison term in the death of a fourth young woman.

• In November, 1971, we note that two police officers from Frankfort, Germany, visited McHenry County authorities where they were investigating the deaths of three young women who were murdered during the time Mark Smith was in service in West Germany.

• And final mention was published in the December, 1971 review of events: wire reports disclosed that Mark Smith, 22 year-old confessed murderer of two McHenry women and two others in Illinois and Arkansas, had admitted killing eight others while stationed with the Army in Germany. Smith is serving a 400-year sentence for the murders committed in this country.

• Let us step back now to 1970, as we continue to recall the other highlights of that year.

• In February of 1970, a crowd of over 3,000 watched the first snowmobile races held at the West Campus field, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

• Later the same month, Harold Hobbs, retired city police chief, was honored by the City Council with a plaque recognizing his outstanding service to the city.

• Thirty young men met in March to organize a Jaycee Club in McHenry. Chuck Heinmiller was chosen temporary chairman.

• About 200 friends, members of their families, and students-past and present, attended the open house held at West Campus cafeteria honoring Mrs. John Bolger and Clarence Anglese, who retired after contributing considerably more than half their lifetime to teaching McHenry young people.

• Fire damage estimated to run as high as $100,000 swept through beautiful Nativity Lutheran Church, 3506 E. Wonder Lake Road, Wonder Lake, on June 9.

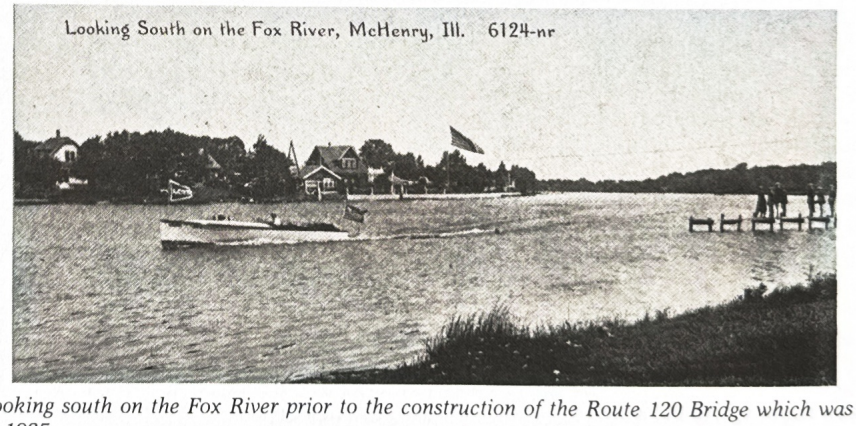
• Also in June, the 11th District American Legion Auxiliary Convention was held in McHenry East Campus High School.

• In action taken the same month, the University of Illinois Board of Trustees acted unanimously to turn over the Volo Bog to the State Department of Conservation.

• Several churches in McHenry, in cooperation with members of the American Legion color guard, sponsored a patriotic rally in the city park following the request of President Richard Nixon to make the July 4 weekend one of prayer and thanksgiving.

• It is noted in August recaps that an entry of Northern Pump Co. Farms won two consecutive years in Hereford cattle judging at the Illinois State Fair.

• One or more burglars broke into the McHenry National Food store early on the morning of Aug. 26 and took with them money and an assortment of items with a value upward of $3,500.



View looking south on the Fox River prior to the construction of the Route 120 Bridge which was built around 1925.

• Rev. Raymond M. Hettermann, a native of Johnsburg, celebrated his Silver Jubilee in the priesthood March 8 at St. John the Baptist Church, Johnsburg.

• The Board of Consolidated School District 15 selected Parkland School as the name of the new junior high school to be erected on Rt. 120 and Ringwood Road.

• McHenry's new City Council room housed its largest crowd in April when the proposed annexation of the Country Club Estates was debated. Later the same month, the annexation was approved.

• In May a total of 300 voted for the consolidation of St. Mary's and St. Patrick's Catholic Schools. Montini was the new name chosen for the combined school.

• Because of the tremendous amount of rain which fell during one week in May, John C. Carroll, as sheriff and director of safety for the county, ordered the Fox River closed to boat traffic.

• After two bomb threats at East Campus on successive days in October, an ultimatum was given that all time lost during those threats would be made up by the students.

• When Art Tyrrell of Wonder Lake was swept into the office of county sheriff in the November election with 58 percent of the votes cast, he made political history. With an unprecedented McHenry County vote of 20,752 for a Democratic candidate, this former Illinois Crime Commission agent established himself as a favorite with voters in a traditionally Republican stronghold.

• According to November chronology, the City of McHenry, with a then present population figure of 6,643, had the largest rate of change — 99.1 percent — in the ten year period reported in the census.

• After twenty-two and a half years and 63,000 miles, Alex Justen, genial mail carrier on City Route II, retired from the local postal service in December.

1971

• In January, 1971, the McHenry Post Office announced that all window service on Saturdays at the local office would be discontinued.

• A total of 320 students of McHenry High School conducted a volleyball marathon in March and realized $1,500. The proceeds were used to buy advertising space and time to tell their story, "Save Our Schools", in the referendum to raise the educational rate in District 156 by .40. The referendum passed by 676 votes. The total vote was 3,108 yes/2,432 no.

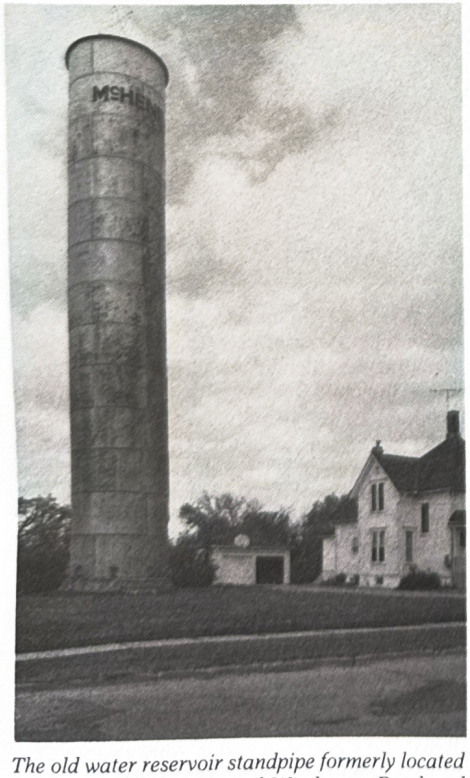
• By a unanimous decision of the Board of McHenry High School District 156 in April, members voted to become entirely separated from Consolidated Grade School District 15.

• In July, a bombshell exploded at the meeting of the Board of High School District 156 when President James Althoff introduced an offer made to the McHenry County College for the sale of East Campus and McCracken Field.

• In the same month, a total of 30,000 people lined the parade route for the Marine Festival, which was bigger and better than ever.

• Doors of ten McHenry schools opened in September to welcome a record number of students. In all, there were 5,662 enrolled in classes at all age levels.

• Later the same month, McHenry residents watched with interest as workmen started the gigantic task of taking down the city's 90-foot standpipe on Waukegan Road, erected before the turn of the century.



The old water reservoir standpipe formerly located on the northeast corner of Waukegan Road and Third Street. It was constructed before 1900 and was dismantled in 1971. It is now the site of Rotary Park.

Fox River scene of the Otto Sohm's residence directly south of the 120 Bridge on the east side of the river.

1972

• A zoning reclassification was granted by the City Council which would permit construction of a 60-room motel on the west side of Front Street (Ill. Rt. 31) in the Meadow Lane area.

• Service by the new McHenry Area Rescue Squad became a reality Jan. 10. The new squad vehicle was not an ambulance and would be used only in emergencies. Because there was only one vehicle, trips would be made only to McHenry Hospital.

• John Baxter, believed to be the oldest resident of McHenry, died February 15 at the age of 103.

• A "first" for McHenry High School in March — The Warriors won the regional title when they defeated Antioch 63-61.

• The same month, ground was broken for a new addition for the Pioneer Center at McCullom Lake.

• A vote, listed unofficially as 174 in favor and 109 against, assured the community of McHenry Shores that it would become incorporated. Located southeast of McHenry on the shores of the Fox River, the new municipality had a population estimated near 700.

• The McHenry City Council agreed to enter into a preannexation agreement with the McHenry Development Company subject to final approval of the ordinance. The land in question is known as the Jacob Freund property located just north of the city.

• In May, construction was slated to begin on a new addition to the First Baptist Church of McHenry.

• Later the same month, the Greater McHenry Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors held a very successful Commerce and Industry Exposition at Parkland School. A total of 4,000 persons viewed the exhibits.

• The frost of June 11 killed much corn on local farms.

• Weather continued in extremes in July when, due to heavy rains, the McHenry County Sheriff's Department advised that the Fox River was closed to boat traffic because of damage done to piers and seawalls.

• Also in July, the County Board acted on the Road and Bridge recommendation to proceed with the extension of Bull Valley Road, south of McHenry at the intersection with the Crystal Lake blacktop.

• In September, the Plaindealer honored Miss Ann Frisby as "lady of the day" as she observed her ninetieth birthday. She was presented a plaque "in recognition for long 'personal' and unique service to the Plaindealer".

• Weather once again continued to act out its unpredictable occurrences in September as rain came — and came — and came. The McHenry area had homes surrounded by water and streets under water.

• Later that month, the county was declared a disaster area by the Small Business Administration of the Federal Government. The announcement meant that loans would be available to those affected by the flooding due to the heavy rains earlier in September.

• Congressman John Anderson acted as parade marshal for the Johnsburg Community Club's Fiftieth Year Celebration held Sept. 24.

• To close the year we note Mrs. Clara Stilling and her family donated 40 acres of land on Rt. 31 to McHenry Hospital to be used to develop and construct an all new hospital and other allied health care facilities. The Hospital also obtained from Mrs. Stilling an option to purchase an adjacent 60 acres.

1973

• One of the chief projects of 1973 was the Lakeland Park sewerage system made possible by a HUD federal grant in the amount of $577,000.

• Robert L. Weber was named new president of the McHenry State Bank in January. He would fill the vacancy created by the death of Gerald Carey.

• Also in January, the City Council was informed that the State had granted permission to install traffic lights at three locations on Route 120, west of the railroad track. The three intersections are at Crystal Lake Road, Industrial Drive and Meadow Lane.

• It was announced in February that in order to meet the rapid growth in the McHenry area, Illinois Bell had introduced a new telephone prefix, number 344.

• A monumental 72,000 pounds of newspapers, magazines and corrugated cardboard were accumulated at the McHenry Market Place for the first of the monthly paper drives held locally.

• In March, Supt. Fred Meyer was authorized to negotiate with Lakeland Construction on a water crossing at Industrial Drive and Route 120. It was suggested to relocate Boone Creek 300 feet through the city park on the south side of the highway beginning at the Wilbert Hecht property and continuing easterly.

• A late evening count of votes and a lopsided 598 to 74 in Ward 4 threw McHenry's mayoral election to Joseph B. Stanek. The results meant defeat for Donald P. Doherty, who had headed the city government for the past twelve years.

• Many will remember June, 1973, as the personal property taxes for individual McHenry county taxpayers came to a happy historic close with the mailing of more than 4,000 refunds of 1971 personal property taxes.

• Not many of us who were in this community on June 9, 1973, will forget the following incident, when fright seized the entire McHenry community and extended for many miles. Just before 3 p.m. on that date an explosion leveled the World Wide Fireworks Company at 4004 McCullom Lake Road. The rumbling quake was felt for miles, sending residents from their homes and shoppers into the streets. The spectacular outburst came in the midst of 90-degree temperatures and Fire Chief Glenn Peterson said it was very possible the explosion was caused by spontaneous combustion. Damage was estimated at a half-million dollars.

• The Recreation and Parks Committee meeting in July recommended to the City Council that the vacant lot at Waukegan and Third Streets (the old water tower site) be temporarily established as a public park.

• A limited open campus at the junior-senior high school on Crystal Lake Road was approved unanimously by the board of District 156 after considerable discussion.

• Developers of Port Royal, a 238-acre tract of land east of the Fox River in the Snug Harbor area, sought annexation to the City of McHenry in August.

• Mrs. Clara Wiedrich celebrated her 100th birthday August 21st.

• Head Start, the federal government program designed to help underprivileged prekindergarten age children face the challenge of school came to McHenry in Sept.

• The same month the culmination of long months of work on Rt. 120 west came in the ribbon cutting ceremony held in front of the McHenry Market Place. Numerous state and local officials and interested citizens were present for the opening of the new road.

• Ground breaking plans were unveiled for a new McHenry Hospital just south of the city limits. Target date was set for the following spring.

1974

• Daylight saving time went into effect January 6. This was supposed to relieve the energy crisis.

• McHenry's East Campus, which has offered education to the city's high school students since shortly after the mid-twenties, was placed on the market in January. The High School Board voted to contact real estate firms regarding the building sale. However, after many months of concentrated effort to secure a buyer for the building, it was finally taken off the market in May.

• LaVerne Hromec was elected the first woman alderman in the City of McHenry in February. She would represent the fourth ward in Lakeland Park.

• Flames swept through a more than century-old Green Street building housing two stores February 11, and left damage estimated in excess of $100,000. Destroyed were The Bootery, 1246 N. Green Street and The Candy Box (Agatha Gifts & Candies), 1242 N. Green.

• High winds that caused snow covered wires to come together with force resulted in problems that left thousands without electrical power in a severe snow storm Feb. 22. Traffic was tied up because of blocked roads and schools were closed.

• In March, the energy crunch became even more critical as the City Council passed a resolution stating that effective March 6, persons in the city be requested to purchase gasoline according to the last digit of their vehicle license number.

• Also in March, flooding of the Fox River caused great concern. The river was about 3 feet above normal.

• April — After a year of seeking property for a city park, the City Council entered into an option agreement with Kenneth Petersen of 4112 W. McCullom Lake Road to buy approximately 33 acres of land on the south side of McCullom Lake Road — 13.7 acres west of the Chicago Northwestern tracks and 19.6 acres east of the tracks. Cost of the property was $3,000 an acre or approximately $99,985.

• The same month, after an effort of eight years for permission to erect an electric traffic signal at the intersection of Rt. 120 and River Road, the State finally granted approval to proceed.

View looking east over the Fox River on the Route 120 Bridge, c. 1928.

View looking east onto Green Street with the buildings pictured from left to right now occupied by: The Gambler, The Office Shop, the Beauty Parlor and Bev's World. The steeple on the right is the former Hoot Noonan's Tavern.

• At their business meeting in June, members of the First Baptist Church of McHenry voted to begin a Christian School in their building. The school would begin with kindergarten and extend through the tenth grade.

• Road work commenced which would connect Lillian Street on the west side of the CNWRR tracks to Grove Street on the east side, with a completion date of Sept. 15, 1974.

• Within the span of five days in July, three barns in the McHenry area were destroyed by fire. In the fire on the former Clinton Raven farm, eight valuable horses were destroyed.

• Many local places of business were designated as sales outlets for the new state lottery tickets. The sale started July 30 and the first weekly drawing was scheduled for Aug. 8.

South side of Main Street. The building on the left has been occupied by McHenry Printing Services since the early 1970's.

• Construction on Bull Valley Road between Route 31 and the Crystal Lake-McHenry blacktop was in progress during August.

• In September, the capture of a bank robber in the heart of McHenry carried with it all of the color reminiscent of the thirties. Arrested as the result of a road block at the corner of Rtes. 120 and 31 was Robert F. Mason, 50, of 1286 Wheeling Drive, Mount Prospect. Mason was apprehended a short time after he had stolen $8,215 from the State Bank of Richmond. He was carrying it in a brown paper bag.

• An ordinance authorizing annexation of the Petersen Park property, located north of the city, was approved by the City Council. The city purchased the land from Kenneth C. Petersen for $115,000.

• In November, a special school task force accepted building plan responsibility. The recommendation was to implement a four-year high school in the two separate buildings (East & West Campus) of "nearly equal" quality.

• Also in November, ground was broken for the new St. Paul's Episcopal Church on St. Paul's Avenue and the Alliance Bible Church located at 3815 Idyll Dell Road.

• Miller's Steak House, formerly known as Al's White House, located on Rt. 120 and Chapel Hill Road, was destroyed by fire on Christmas Day.

1975

• Earl Walsh resigned January 6 as City Clerk of McHenry after 38 years of uninterrupted service. He had never missed attendance at a meeting.

• Several aldermen at the City Council meeting were surprised to learn that there was a restriction against school buses using streets in the Whispering Oaks area. The Council voted to open Whispering Oaks to school buses.

• Extremely high winds which caused drifting snow to block north-south roadways and reduce visibility to one-foot, were responsible for numerous multiple car accidents in Feb.

• In March, damage to Valley View School by fire, smoke and vandalism was expected to run between $150,000 and $200,000. Authorities said it was apparent the school had been forcibly entered, ransacked and burglarized. Two juveniles, a brother and sister, ages 12 and 9, were apprehended by the police.

• The McHenry area was covered with about 11 inches of snow on April 2.

• A crowd of about 1,800 students listened intently to the contemporary sounds of the Eagles rock band as they played in West Campus gymnasium. The appearance of the popular band was one of the prizes awarded when local students won the WCFL Radio Station School Spirit Contest.

• In July, Fred Meyer was selected as parade marshal for the Marine Festival Parade, Sunday, July 13. Meyer, who was superintendent of public works for the city, had played a prominent roll in the success of Marine Festivals for the past 18 years.

• The City Council approved the annexation of 27 acres of land located west of McHenry, north of Route 120 along Ringwood Road by a vote of 6 to 2. It would be used for a residential development.

• The "White House", which many of us remember so fondly as our kindergarten home, located on the south side of Waukegan Road, just west of Landmark School, was designated for use as an alternative high school program for 25 students. High School District 156 leased the building to house a dynamic new program which would provide 3 types of education approaches to its students.

• In August the Plaindealer marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the paper. The Centennial Issue contained 136 pages and 10,000 copies were printed.

• For the first time in history, the City Council deemed it necessary to use tax anticipation warrants in order to meet the payroll and pay monthly bills. The Council decided to purchase tax anticipation warrants in the amount of $75,000.

• Commuter service between Chicago and Lake Geneva, with two morning and two evening stops at McHenry, ended Aug. 11. With it ended an era in railroad history that had its start in 1871 when the NorthWestern Railway opened its line into Lake Geneva.

• A decisive victory for proponents of a new high school in the Johnsburg area came at the polls in August when a total of 1,666 persons turned out to express themselves in favor of forming a new community unit school district comprising all the territory of Johnsburg Consolidated School District 12.

• Structural damage amounting to an estimated $80,000 loss destroyed the interior of an unoccupied landmark, the Hanley House on the west side of Crystal Lake Road at Lillian Street on Nov. 13. The house, which was built in the mid-1800's at a cost of $10,000, had 14 rooms. It was built by A. H. Hanley, a prominent McHenry businessman and property owner during that era. The clay used in making the bricks for the Hanley House had been taken from the land on which the house was built. Later in 1975, it was learned that two McHenry area juveniles were arrested in connection with the fire that gutted the landmark.

The abandoned A.H. Hanly homestead which was built in the 1860's was located on the site of the McHenry State Bank Weber building on Crystal Lake Road. Vandals playing in the structure caused a fire which totally destroyed the building on November 13, 1975.

1976

• McHenry received its official designation as a Bicentennial City when a civic ceremony was held at West Campus Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2:30. The 40-minute program was sponsored by the local Bicentennial Commission.

• The Johnsburg School Board, at its meeting in February, started action to finalize tasks necessary to purchase a high school site.

• City officials appeared surprised and flustered when a large number of people showed up at City Hall to attend "an informal public meeting" to discuss the Old McHenry Bridge project. Plans for the project had been completed and submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation for approval.

• In May educators were facing the challenge of planning based on the withdrawal of large numbers of students in the next 3 years from High School District 156. Johnsburg District 12 would soon be operating a high school for students living in that area, and it was anticipated that 600 to 700 students would be using that facility rather than McHenry High Schools.

• Again in April columns, we note that county citizens were protesting the scheduled destruction of the 96 year-old Pearl Street Bridge in McHenry and that their numbers had swelled to over 900, according to petitions gathered by the newly formed McHenry Historic Bridge Committee, which had hopes of saving the landmark.

• Just in time for the busy Memorial day weekend, McHenry Hospital opened its newly expanded ten-bed Emergency Department and Trauma Center.

• Final approval was given by the City Council in June for construction of Unit 1 at Brittany Park, a new subdivision located west of Lakeland Park.

• Petersen Park would be the scene of a variety of activities Sunday, July 4, when the community would dedicate the park and observe the start of a new century. The Bicentennial Garden would be dedicated as a planned feature and there would be the presentation of plaques for the oldest homes in McHenry.

• In July, the City Council took 3 decisive steps toward the replacement of the old Pearl Street steel bridge. It approved an agreement covering construction and maintenance of the bridge, a resolution accepting the agreement and authorizing execution of delivery, and accepted plans and specifications.

• Announcement was made in September that the local Admiral Plant at 3908 W. Elm Street would close its doors Nov. 1st. Admiral Group of Rockwell International Corp. announced plans to transfer operations of its McHenry plant to the Harvard TV assembly operations.

• After months of construction, the McHenry Public Library at the corner of Green and Main Streets reopened with a new addition early in October. On Sunday, November 7, the public attended open house.

• It was revealed in November that the old Pearl Street Bridge had been purchased by Terra Cotta Realty Company of Crystal Lake, to preserve it for its historical value. One span would be used as a pedestrian bridge over Squaw Creek as the approach to the proposed new office building from the new parking lot for TC Industries, Inc.

• In November the work of the McHenry Bicentennial was drawing to its conclusion and one of its last works was to plant the state trees of the original thirteen colonies in the Bicentennial Garden in Petersen park.

• The City of McHenry became 146 acres larger in December, following unanimous approval by the City Council to annex Miller-owned land on Rt. 120, west of McHenry. The new city property has land on the south side of Rt. 120, stretching from Draper Road to Valley View School. It extends southward to a subdivision of homes, forming somewhat of a square, approximately 146 acres large.

1977

• The City of McHenry was expanding again. At January 17's Council meeting, aldermen by a 6-1 margin approved a basic plan for annexation of 126 acres of property owned by Phil and Tim Wheelock, just off of Draper Road.

• An ordinance was adopted at the City Council meeting in February affecting anyone planning to construct a new home within the city limits. The new ordinance within the building code states that a home must have 1,000 square feet of living space in order to be constructed in the corporate city limits.

• McHenry's new Senior Citizen walk-in-center at the Moose Lodge had its official opening May 2. The Center would be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon., Wed. and Thur.

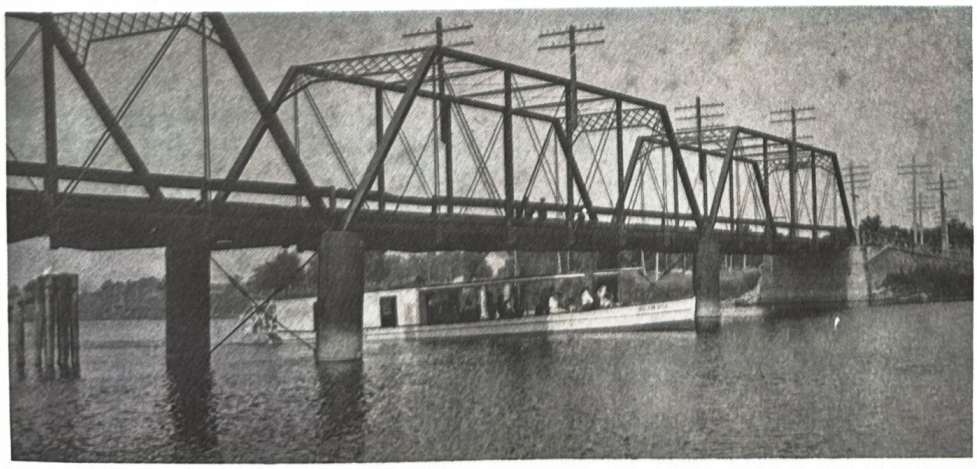
• Later in the year, with an award of a Title VII grant to provide a noon day meal, the McHenry County Senior Citizens Council announced that service at McHenry would begin July 25. The meals would be offered to all persons 60 years and over, five days a week.

• An employee, who was at work, and a fireman were injured when fire destroyed the old Wing 'n Fin Hunting Lodge on Lincoln (Sullivan Lake) Road, one-fourth mile west of Rt. 12.

• In September, the much awaited launching of the dredge which would clean up McCullom Lake was hoisted into the water with the five-year program to rejuvenate the lake expected to begin soon.

• October — The City of McHenry would soon be another 240 acres larger as the City Council gave preliminary approval to a preannexation agreement following a public hearing. The land being considered for annexation to the city is located on the west side of Draper Road directly west of Pheasant Valley and directly south of the new Glacier Ridge subdivision.

• Another chapter in the rich history of the McHenry area ended as the last of 2,000 head of cattle was sold by Northern Pump Farms. The 4 day sale marked the end of 23 years of cattle operation for farms in the community.



Old Pearl Street Bridge built in 1880-1881. Note the rear paddle wheel excursion boat under the bridge.

Bathing beauties in the Fox River during the 1920's.

• The McHenry Police Department began a campaign in Nov. which would educate the parents of the community about drug abuse.

• Fred Meyer, Supt. of Public Works for the City of McHenry, along with Richard Klemm, Chairman of the McHenry County Board, Clarence Regner, Township Road Commissioner, Walter Dean, Supervisor for McHenry Township, and Mayor Joseph Stanek, participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony which officially opened the new Pearl Street Bridge in December.

1978

• Carestoel, the all-new 310-bed Skilled Care Nursing Facility and Rehabilitation Center at 803 Royal Drive, opened in January.

• Following a lengthy discussion in February, the City Council voted to purchase property fronting McCullom Lake from Herman Mass. The property, which is adjacent to Petersen Park, will be added to the park and the 500 feet of shoreline will be made into a city beach.

• The City of McHenry was making plans to conduct a special census in June to determine the exact population within the city limits.

• The 100th anniversary of the Miller Chapel at the corner of Ringwood and Wilmot Roads was marked by a family gathering in the historic structure. Seventy-five people came from as far as Florida and Texas for the occasion.

• Sunday, May 28, was a memorable day at Petersen Park when the McHenry Area Jaycees dedicated their new shelter. The ceremony marked culmination of a two-year goal for the active organization.

• McHenry Hospital withdrew its offer to purchase East Campus. As a result, board members of High School District 156 made the decision that to pursue the goal of one four-year high school would not be feasible.

• Work was scheduled to begin in June on a two-story building which would enlarge the banking facilities of the McHenry State Bank. The building would contain approximately 10,000 feet of space and would be located at the corner of Pearl Street and Richmond Road.

• The Fox River was closed to all boat traffic for several days because of heavy rains in the area in July.

• The 120 year-old Holcombville School, located between McHenry and Crystal Lake, was plaqued as an historic site on July 9. The master of ceremonies was a former McHenry resident who taught in the school, Howard Phalin of Wilmette. Howard, who was born and raised on a farm on Rt. 31 and later lived on Richmond Road, started his career as a teacher in the little rural school.

• With a vote of 4 to 2 by the Board of Education in a special meeting in July, it was decided McHenry High School would operate as two 4-year schools starting with the year 1979-80.

• The same month service totalling 82 years ended for 3 members of the McHenry Public Library Board. Retiring were William J. Bolger, Earl R. Walsh and Mrs. Clarence Anglese.

• The City Council voted to accept the Zoning Board of Appeals recommendation and annex the RAE Motor Corporation property located on a 5-acre parcel in the Sherman Hill industrial complex.

• The Board of High School District 156 approved the negotiated salary agreement of a 2-year contract for teachers. This was believed to be the first time in the history of the District that a 2-year contract would be in effect.

• The McHenry City Council's consensus was that it would annex the Martin-Anderson property if the final draft of the annexation agreement met with their approval.

• A strike by employees of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad as part of a growing national railway strike left McHenry area passengers without a way to work in Sept.

• One of the oldest religious landmarks in the county would take on a new look with an expansion program announced in October by the First United Methodist Church of McHenry. An important part of the church's planning for its new addition, however, had been to preserve the location, design, and character of the sanctuary which has been in continuous service to its congregation and community since before the Civil War.

• A routine bus ride to school ended tragically when the bus went out of control, striking a tree and rolling over on River Road near McHenry Dam. The driver and 43 children were injured, and one child died 4 days after the crash.

• Route 31 will be the new attendance boundary line separating the students for East Campus and West Campus when the phase-in of the 4-year programs at both high schools begins in the next school year 1979-80.

1979

• The final preliminary plans for what many hoped would be the improvement of the Front & Elm Street intersection, were approved by the City Council. The plans were submitted for approval by the Illinois Dept. of Transportation and were aimed at solving the problems of what McHenry residents had labelled the "worst and most dangerous intersection in the city".

• The major change in the plan called for revision on Waukegan Road, with restrictions placed on entrance and exit. Entrance to Waukegan Road will be only allowed to traffic northbound on Front St., which turns left (east) on Waukegan Road. Exit from Waukegan Road will be right-turn-only onto Front Street.

Train wreck which occurred at McHenry Depot in 1908. The old Depot was located further south than the present Depot location.

• Severe winter weather continued to hamper activity in McHenry as snow and drifting conditions closed schools and many businesses and made streets and roads in the area extremely hazardous. The McHenry County Sheriff's Department snowmobile patrol was used searching McHenry streets, delivering emergency medical prescriptions, transporting stranded motorists home, transporting medical personnel to the hospital and providing back-up to several McHenry Rescue squad calls.

• The McHenry City Council voted to spend over $50,000 on more equipment to help the city battle snow, present and future, while Supt. of Public Works Fred Meyer told the City Council the city had never spent more than $7,000 in a winter to hire outside firms to remove snow. That year, the figure was already listed at over $20,000, not including the cost of the Jan. 24 blizzard.

• A large part of McHenry would have Cable TV available by July 1. Community Cablevision, which had received the franchise rights in McHenry, was also looking for a site location for an office in McHenry.

• In April it was reported that flooding problems were still critical in the Fox River area. River Road south of McHenry was closed in one location because water was over a foot deep in one portion of the road between the dam and Moraine Hills State Park.

• April found the city adding a 34-acre park to its acquisitions with the approval of purchase of part of the Edwin V. Knox Farm at a cost of $115,000.

• Father Eugene C. Baumhofer announced in June that he would soon leave St. Mary's Parish, where he had his first assignment as an assistant to the late Msgr. Charles Nix. Father Baumhofer's retirement, due to health reasons, ended his pastorate at St. Mary's that began there Nov. 22, 1960.

• A capacity crowd of 1,200 attended Johnsburg High School's first commencement, held in the school gymnasium in June.

• The McHenry City Council met in regular session in July and decided to apply for the Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) grant for the development of Knox Park including the swimming pool, regardless of any red tape involved, a concern expressed at a previous meeting. Dissension still existed though, over the actual location of the swimming pool. Mayor Stanek wanted the pool to be located in Knox Park which is south of the city on Green Street, while others wanted the pool in Petersen Park.

• A Mass honored Sister M. Andreella, who retired after 40 years as organist, choir director and music teacher at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

• From July columns we learn that Winding Creek, the 385 acre development, was annexed into the City of McHenry.

• Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Anglese, one of the city's most respected couples, were parade marshals for the 1979 Fiesta Day Parade.

• After a 3-hour mediation session between the Board of Education of McHenry Elementary District 15 and the McHenry Classroom Teachers Association, the MCTA broke off negotiations and initiated a strike against the Board of Education. The strike would continue for 9 days.

• Memories of events experienced in their lifetimes, and of stories told by the men who preceded them, highlighted the 125th anniversary observance of McHenry Lodge No. 158, A.F. and A.M., held Oct. 3. The event marked a milestone for an organization that extends back to the early days of McHenry's founding.

• The City Council voted unanimously to increase the acreage of the city by approximately 125 acres. Commonly known as the Falcon Development, the Gladstone Farm on Route 31, north of the city, was formally approved, annexed, zoned and platted (preliminary) at the October meeting.

• The rededication of the newly restored St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Johnsburg took place the weekend of Nov. 17.

1980

• The Board of Elementary School District 15 approved the dismissal of 20 teachers for the coming school year and the elimination of programs for Home Economics, Industrial Arts and Guidance at a special meeting March 18. The Board indicated that this difficult decision had been made as part of an effort to reduce the accumulated $805,000 budget as of the end of the school year which was predicted to increase further during the next school year if no action was taken.

• Charles Vycital, prominent McHenry business man, announced that he would be retiring after almost six decades in the family hardware business. Vycital's Hardware, 1226 N. Green Street, was founded in 1906 by John J. Vycital, who died in 1952. Charles joined the business in 1924 and soon afterward became bookkeeper.

• Beginning in June, the city observed a 90-day moratorium on metered parking. At the end of 90 days, a representative of the Chamber of Commerce was to return to the City Council and report on how the experiment affected sales in the business community. The metered parking would be replaced by two-hour parking for the 3-month period.

• The consecration service of the First United Methodist Church's new building brought parishioners and friends to the beautiful structure on April 13.

• "Let's Make McHenry Beautiful" was the theme adopted by the McHenry Beautification Committee which held an open meeting in the City Council chambers. The committee's purpose was to encourage all businesses, as well as residents, to join the campaign: "Let's Sweep McHenry Clean" and "Let's Make McHenry Bloom".

• The adversary nature of the gypsy moth controversy changed to one of cooperation as Illinois Dept. of Agriculture officials met with several McHenry area residents to begin a progressive trapping program to control the moth population.

• In July it was announced that a state government dept. had offered assistance to McHenry Shores residents in exploring the possibility of annexation of that village to the City of McHenry.

Inside of Vycital's Hardware Store on Green Street taken in 1908. Standing left to right are: Fred Karls, Hubert Weber, Henry Schaefer, John Vycital and Frances Vycital.

• A summer storm with hurricane-like winds hit the McHenry area with fury. The tempest uprooted trees, swamped boats, scattered branches and interrupted electric and telephone service for many residents. One gust of wind was recorded at 87 mph.

• A mother, Connie Moy, and a daughter, Ling Lee, were reunited in McHenry after a 32-year separation enforced by an ocean and differing politics. Ling Lee arrived in McHenry with her husband and family after living 39 years in China.

• It was the end of an era in August when the passenger train serving riders between McHenry and Richmond made its last run. Trains were parked on side tracks at the McHenry station. The halt of service between the two cities was announced by the Regional Transportation Agency (RTA), in charge of passenger service. A spokesman for the Chicago & NorthWestern Railway said its oldest timetable, from March of 1890, showed service between McHenry and Richmond at that time. It was also pointed out that the line was built in 1854 by the Fox River Valley Railroad.

• Preliminary census figures released by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, showed an increase of 57.7 percent in the population of the City of McHenry in the preceding 10 years.

The McHenry Chicago Northwestern Train Depot in 1910. The men's waiting room was on the left and the ladies' waiting room was to the right in the photo.

• Memories of 25 years were evident as residents, former residents and friends joined in celebrating the Silver Anniversary of the Village of McCullom Lake, August 16.

• September — The first such charter to be issued in the State of Illinois in 25 years for an American Legion Post named a new organization in McHenry. The Polish Legion American Veteran Organization issued a charter to Polish American veterans, Liberty Post No. 188.

• In November the Finance committees of the McHenry City Council recommended that the city not go to a full time mayor. However, the committee and other aldermen endorsed a steep increase in pay for the mayor. In fact, the following month the Council did approve a salary hike from $3,200 per year to $15,000 per year for that position.

1981

• In two separate actions in February, the McHenry City Council voted to permanently replace metered parking in the city with two-hour free parking and leased another 20 parking spaces in the Green Street lot to the Northern Illinois Medical Association.

• Landmark School, built in 1894, was being considered for historic plaquing.

• Impressed by the progress of the Boone Creek dredging project, Senator Jack Schaffer promised Mayor Joe Stanek whatever possible assistance the State could offer from unused available Div. of Waterways funds. The project, financed by $50,000 from revenue sharing money, would restore the creek channel from the Green Street bridge to the confluence of the two tributaries near Maple Avenue. Completion of the channel clearing was estimated to cost another $140,000.

• In September, the City Council approved participation in the McHenry Area Economic Development Commission, a joint City and Chamber of Commerce venture as a quasi-public commission, to further business health and expansion.

• The City of McHenry took on the Chicago and NorthWestern Railroad (CNWR) in November in an attempt to prevent the rail service from removing a ticket agent at the McHenry station. The move would relegate the McHenry station to "associate status" and prompted reaction from municipal and civic officials.

• One of three large supermarkets in McHenry, the A&P, announced plans to close its doors for the last time in January of the following year.

Mill Pond with the Landmark School in the background. The pond was drained in 1927.

• The McHenry Public Library proudly announced a Historical-Genealogical Room. The library was in the process of collecting, organizing and cataloging historical and genealogical material on the local, state and national level. There would also be material available for assisting people with European genealogy.

• The Montini Catholic School system opened a gala week of festivities to celebrate its tenth anniversary in April.

• The McHenry Choral Club went on stage in West Campus auditorium May 2, as members recalled memories with friends and former members in the audience. This was the fortieth year anniversary of the club.

• Outstanding alumni of the McHenry High Schools will be recognized by a "Hall of Distinguished Graduates" in future years, according to action taken by the High School District 156 Board of Education. The board approved a committee recommendation to honor notable graduates at the annual spring academic recognition dinner through plaques, pictures and newspaper recognition.

1982

• Mother Nature struck, and struck McHenry hard in January, closing roads, cutting power and making life miserable for countless numbers of people. Up to 18 stranded motorists whose cars had either stalled or become locked in drifts, were housed temporarily in the Council Chambers of city hall. The lowest recorded temperature (not including wind-chill) was 27 below zero at 5:48 a.m. on Sunday. The wind reached a speed of 48 mph before the gauge broke.

• Utility routes for the McHenry Hospital site, at the corner of Bull Valley Road and Route 31, were approved by a unanimous vote of the McHenry City Council in February. A matter of crucial importance to the relocation of McHenry Hospital, the extension of utilities to the 103-acre site was the subject of a Utilities Committee meeting.

• Noting bad timing and a lack of forthcoming information, 6 of 8 McHenry aldermen took a vocal stand against the possible annexation of McHenry Shores at the regular council meeting in March. However, when the last ballot was counted in the March 16th election, the Village of McHenry Shores ceased to exist and the City of McHenry grew by 1,200 residents.

• A coroner's jury ruled the deaths of three family members of Charles M. Albanese, of Spring Grove, as homicides. Albanese was charged in McHenry County with two counts of murder, one count of attempted murder and felony theft in connection with the arsenic poisoning of his family members. Albanese was tried in subsequent months in McLean County and was convicted. He was sentenced to death.

• A small part of the moon was brought to more than 500 excited McHenry area residents when the Moon Rock exhibit was shown at Edgebrook School in March.

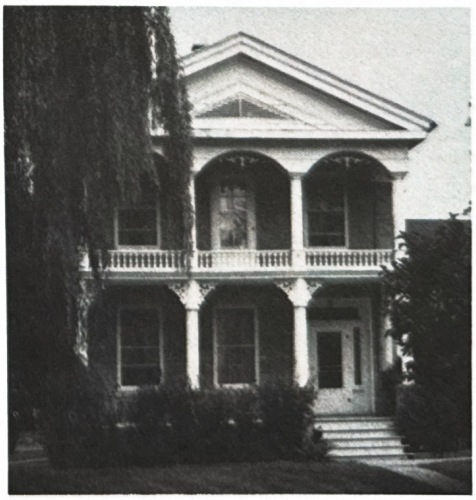
• James Althoff, McHenry businessman, announced that Taylormade Golf Co. would occupy the Old McHenry Flour Mill on Crystal Lake Road. Althoff bought the local landmark just prior to the renovation which included sandblasting to restore the structure. Taylormade would occupy both its first location in the old Admiral building and the mill, which would be ready for occupancy no later than June 1.

• "Future Perfect McHenry" was the theme for McHenry's 1982 Fiesta Days. A highlight of the 10-day gala would be the filling of a 100-year Time Capsule to be contained in Pearl Street Park and opened in 2082.

• A task of organizing a family reunion for the descendants of the 20 immigrants bearing the surname of Freund was under way in May and culminated with the Freund Family Fest in September. About 750 descendants of the German Freunds took part in the festivities.

• An 80 percent increase in sewer rates for the City of McHenry was approved in a 5 to 3 vote by the City Council in June.

• The "Count's House" at 3800 W. Waukegan Road, McHenry, was the first building in the city to be awarded a place on the National Register of Historical Places.



This Greek Revival style residence, known as the Count's House, was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. It is located at 3813 West Waukegan Road. Count Oscar von Oberstadt purchased the property and resided there with his family during the 1920's. The home is believed to have been built prior to the Civil War because it was the type of architecture in vogue at that time.

• The first phase of a building program at St. Patrick's Catholic parish began with demolition of the convent building at the corner of Green and Washington Streets in Sept. The building had been unoccupied for the last year.

• A family business which had its start well before the turn of the century was observing 100 years of service to the community in Sept. Actually there are two businesses which evolved from the partnership of brothers that existed for 12 years. They are the oldest businesses in McHenry still in operation by the original family. The N.J. Justen Furniture and Undertaking firm was established in 1882 and later became known as the Peter M. Justen & Son Funeral Home, located at 3807 W. Elm Street. When the partnership of Nick and Jacob Justen was dissolved, Jacob located on the corner of Green and Elm Streets. That funeral home is now known as the George R. Justen & Son Funeral Home.

• The fruition of an idea sown in the 1960's was celebrated with the ground breaking ceremony at the Route 31 and Bull Valley Road site of the new McHenry Hospital to be known as Northern Illinois Medical Center (NIMC).

1983

• Sixty-two years after he closed the doors of McHenry High School behind him for the last time, Howard V. Phalin returned to be honored for a distinguished career. A plaque was presented to Phalin as the 1983 choice for the Distinguished Graduate Award.

• It was announced in May that the following fall would mark the beginning of a new service when the Dial-a-Ride busses come to McHenry Township. The busses, which cost about $40,000, are equipped with hydraulic lifts for the disabled who are confined to wheelchairs.

• Announcement was made in July that McHenry's High Schools would break with tradition in 1984 by holding two separate graduation ceremonies for East and West Campus.

• With a history covering 143 years, and with an eye to the future growth of the McHenry area, St. Patrick's Parish parishioners began construction of a two-level parish center and administrative building. It will contain 7,800 square feet, 3,900 on each level.

• In August hundreds of children at Landmark School had their fingerprints taken as an additional form of permanent identification.

• The "Crimestoppers" program, which had been in operation in a big way in Crystal Lake and Rockford, received a unanimous endorsement of the McHenry City Council. Crimestoppers would be unveiled in McHenry soon after the printing of this article in September.

• The little park between the McHenry Theatre and Boone Creek, on the east side of Green Street, was named in honor of Earl and Jack Walsh at the regular City Council meeting in October. The park was developed through a cooperative agreement between the McHenry Rotary Club, which provided the money for materials, and the City of McHenry, which provided the labor. The park was named after the Walshes, who together served 78 years in city service. Jack Walsh was a magistrate in McHenry for 40 years and Earl Walsh served as city clerk for 38 years.

• The McHenry City Council authorized the city attorney to draft legislation which would prohibit smoking in the larger retail food stores. The Council, which is comprised of smokers and non-smokers, was unanimous in the desire to act on this proposal.

• Jack and Betty Phelan, who live on Millstream two blocks from the center of town, were awakened at 4 a.m. one morning in November to a loud crash outside their house. A quick survey of the back lawn revealed that an 18-foot Green Mountain Ash, which had been growing near Boone Creek, had been felled by some strange force. It really came as no surprise to them to later discover that their tree was destroyed by a beaver. The creature had been taking up residence on Boone Creek since early that summer.

1984

• Dense black smoke blew across Route 31 south of McHenry one January morning hours after a fire destroyed the Chroma Corporation building, located in the Tonyan Industrial Park since 1978. Chroma Corporation manufactured plastic parts.

• According to population forecasts released in February and done by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, the City of McHenry's growth in the upcoming 20 years was projected to be the highest of any community in McHenry County.

• At a short dedication ceremony in February, the McHenry Public Library recognized the contributions of two McHenry residents, Agnes Tesch Bienapfl and Earl Walsh.

• The April 13 issue of the McHenry Plaindealer marked the end of a career which spanned more than 42 years for Adele Froehlich, who retired as editor of the newspaper.

• The McHenry Community High School District 156 held separate graduation ceremonies in June. This was the first time since West Campus opened in 1968 that McHenry had two commencement exercises for its graduating seniors.

• A few thousand people were in attendance at the ribbon cutting and official dedication of the new Northern Illinois Medical Center (NIMC) at Route 31 and Bull Valley Road in McHenry.

• A new development in landfill technology received the serious attention of the McHenry City Council in August. The Council was considering the co-sponsorship of a test site in McHenry.

• A fire broke out at the Riverside Hotel, one of McHenry's oldest structures, in November. With the prompt response of seven pieces of equipment and 25 firemen, the blaze was controlled in ten minutes and the building suffered minimal damage.

1985

• The year 1985 opened with gusto as Mother Nature buried McHenry in a storm that started New Year's Eve. The storm took the city by surprise and Public Works Dept. crews were forced to rent outside equipment for the first time in many years. By the time the snow let up, nearly a foot was on the ground.

• Laura and Dan Koleno became parents of quadruplets in January. The four infants — Jacquelyn, Holly, Joshua and Robert — were born at Loyola University Hospital in Maywood.

• In mid-January, the McHenry High School Teachers Association issued a strike warning to the McHenry Community High School Dist. 156 Board of Education in response to contract negotiations which had reached a stalemate. A week later, the strike warning became reality as the teachers walked picket lines on the first day of exams. The Board of Education and the Teachers' Association had been involved in contract negotiations since March of 1984.

• The strike continued throughout the end of the month as the Board of Education refused to enter into binding arbitration and the Teachers' Association rejected a compromise offer. An agreement was finally reached in early February and the students returned to the classroom to make up lost school time and semester exams.

• A cold wave hit McHenry in late January as the mercury plummeted to 28° below zero.

• On the business front, the former Riverside Retail Outlet, long a part of the business community, was remodeled and renovated into a cluster of stores called "the McHenry Trading Company".

Riverside Drive looking south with the McHenry Trading Post on the right.

• A local company, Taylor Made Golf Co., announced its merger with a large manufacturer of ski bindings and boots , Salomon, S.A., of France.

• In a project begun in 1984, work continued on the widening and reconstruction of the Route 120 bridge across the Fox River.

• The City Council chambers became a political arena from time to time as the April elections neared. Mayor Stanek faced a challenge from two aldermen: William Busse (2nd) and Frank McClatchey (3rd). But, when the council dealt with its regular business, a new commission was created.

• The Landmark Commission became faced in February with the task of seeking out and denoting historic places and buildings in McHenry. Mayor Stanek also envisioned a substantial role for the Commission in upcoming Sesquicentennial events in 1986.

• The McHenry Area Jaycees inducted the first women members into the chapter during 1985.

• A McHenry resident, Edward Buss, was elected chairman of the McHenry County Board. He had served as county board member for 22 years.

• William Busse was elected mayor of McHenry by a slim 210-vote margin when all the votes were counted in the April general election.

• Salmonella poisoning was in the headlines in April. In McHenry, 12 people were admitted to Northern Illinois Medical Center for treatment.

• The old McHenry Hospital building on Waukegan Road was sold to a Kansas City development firm for remodeling into a senior citizen housing facility.

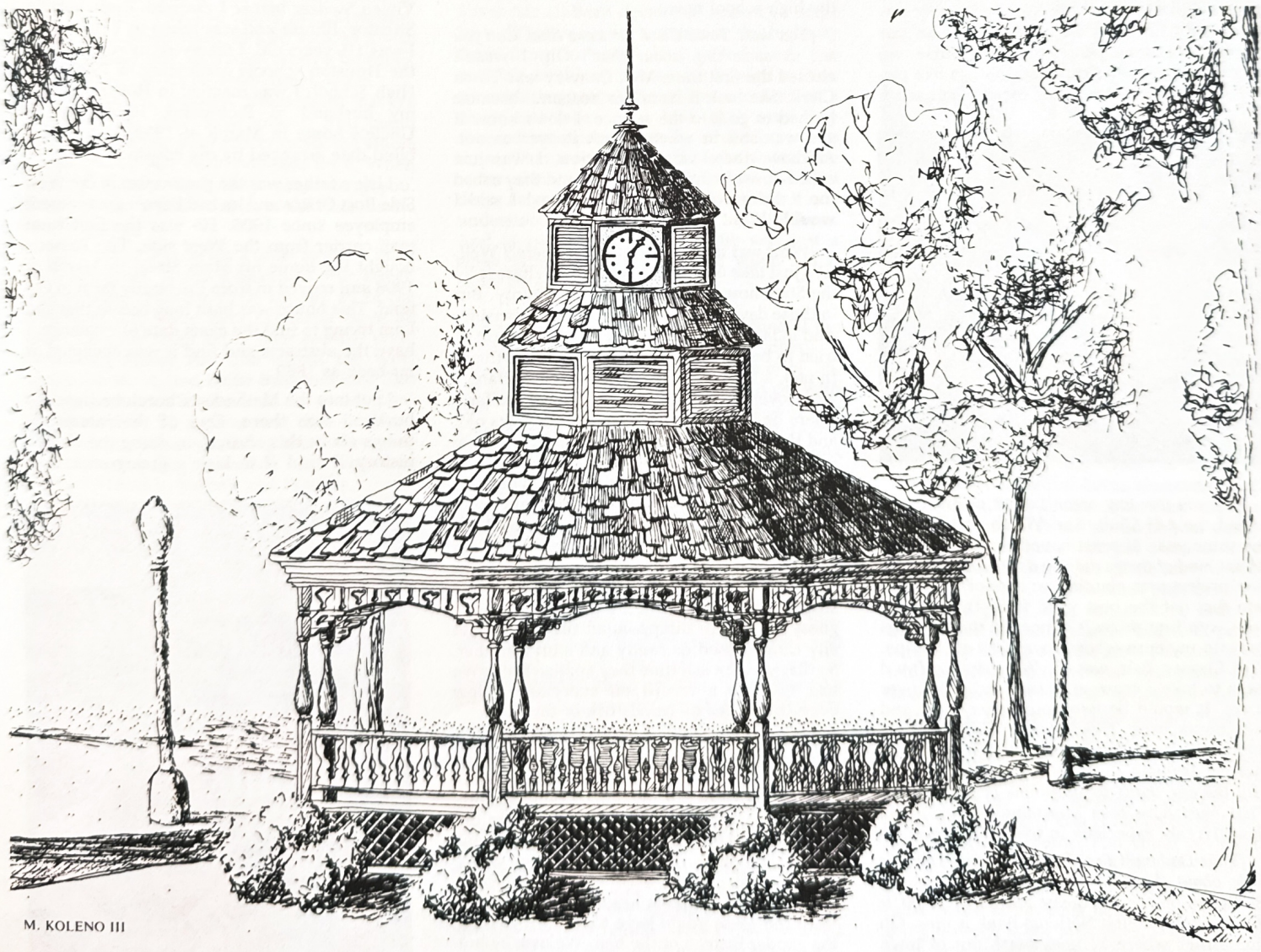
• June started off on a high note with the City Council voting unanimously in favor of a preliminary resolution for up to $2.5 million in Industrial Revenue Bonds for a new motel. Proposal was submitted for a 58 unit motel on the 42 acres located just south of the Northern Illinois Medical Center. Construction was targeted to begin in July and take eight months to complete.

• The McHenry City Council formally established a Sesquicentennial Commission in July to plan a year long celebration to mark the City's 150th Birthday.

• The end of July also brought the end of a career for Earl Walsh, who retired from writing his "So I Hear" column for the McHenry Plaindealer after 50 years.

• A milestone was reached in the life of the McHenry Plaindealer as the paper went daily for the first time on Monday, August 5.

• Icy roads caused a rash of accidents throughout the County in November. An accident that occurred on Route 31 involved a pile-up of a school bus, a tractor-trailer truck hauling cattle and a car on the ice-covered road.



M. KOLENO III

Present gazebo in Veteran's Memorial Park (Pearl Street Park) constructed in celebration of the City's 150th anniversary.

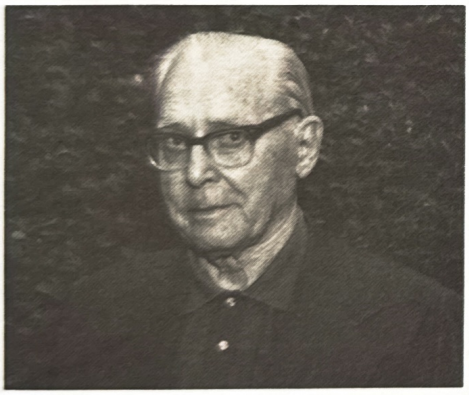
"I Remember McHenry..."

Selections for the interviews included in this booklet were made by the editors who hoped to portray McHenry through many viewpoints and personal experiences. Those who were interviewed graciously shared their lives so this history could become a reality. Only the limitation of time and space prevented their stories from being told in their entirety. ***— Nancy J. Fike***

Walter Anderson

My Dad's name was John Anderson and mother's first name is Anna. They moved to Burton's Bridge in 1912 to a farm. Dad worked in the city and the best connections he could make were from Crystal Lake to Chicago, but then he got tired of traveling so he got a chance to buy the Parkview Hotel in Fox Lake. He stayed there until 1916. The family was getting too big — at that time I think there were 10 of us, so we moved to a place on Draper's Road.

(What did you kids do for entertainment?) Well, we really didn't have much. We read the jokes and played checkers. We'd get a checkerboard for Christmas and that would be our main amusement. And then of course we would have decks of cards and things like picture books. We had nothing extravagant at all.



(Did you join any organizations as a child?) I joined the 4-H Club. Earl Walsh and I joined the same year. It must have been about 1921. *(What kind of things did you do in the 4-H?)* Our first project was planting an acre of corn. The one that got the best yield from that acre of corn won first prize. It happened that the pigs got into my corn when it was just about ripe. The County Fair was in Woodstock. You'd have to take a team of horses and drive over there. It would be two hours over there and two hours back. *(Which roads did you take?)* Snyder's Hill on Bull Valley Road. It goes right straight through over the hills. *(Was Synder's Hill the one that's so steep now in Bull Valley? That must have been something, going up and down.)* Yeah, especially in the winter time.

(Your Dad built Broadway Barbecue. Tell us a little about that.) My Dad opened Broadway Barbecue on the northeast corner of Front & Elm where the First National Bank is now. On the corner where 31 goes north out of town used to be Knox's Service Station, where the Fire Station is now on Route 120. They made a baseball diamond in back of the B.B.Q. That must have been in 1927 and we played ball there for six or eight years. We sold the B.B.Q. in 1943. My brother-in-law and myself bought it back in 1949. In 1951 or 1952, we put up the building where the First National Bank is now. That was for the National Tea Store. Well, then they wanted to make it twice the size and we couldn't get the land. We eventually sold out to the First National Bank.

(Did people come from miles around for the barbecue?) Oh yeah! We had some of the Cub players come here to eat the sandwiches. In fact, my brother's got a little story about going into the Army. Different people asked — "Didn't you work in McHenry's Broadway Barbecue?" — "Yeah, as a boy." "Then we're going to make you the cook of the group!"

(Did you go to high school at McHenry High School?) I didn't have a chance to. My older brother and myself didn't have the chance to go to high school. My sister went to high school. My brother, Albin, graduated with highest honors. In fact, his picture is down at the high school now.

(You were Town Clerk for some time. Can you tell us something about that?) Oh, I wasn't elected the first time. Mrs. Conway was Town Clerk. She took it from her husband, because he had to go into the service. I don't know if she was still in when I took it over or not. Anyhow, there was no election. I was just called down to the Town Board and they asked me if I'd serve as Town Clerk, and I said I would. *(When was this?)* 1944.

(What was it like in 1944 around here?) Well, let's just take one case — welfare. Welfare is by the State now and some is by the County. But in those days, welfare was all by the township. And in fact, I delivered groceries and we sort of tried to be sure that we didn't waste anything. In fact, a fellow in Lily Lake was on welfare. I went over there to see if he needed welfare. There he had two boys about 18, 19 years old, and they were all sitting around doing nothing — asking for welfare checks. I told the boys, instead of giving you a check, I'll take you over to the grocery store and we'll pick out what you can have. So I went over there and I got flour for them and all the things they needed to do all their cookin' at home — no canned stuff, that was expensive. No fancy foods — just strictly basic food. When I gave it to them I guess they were disappointed they didn't get any canned food or candy and stuff like that. So that was the last time they applied for it. We had to keep a record on everything. Now everything goes to Woodstock or the State.

(Did you do most of your shopping in West McHenry when you were growing up?) Well, all our clothing came from Sears, Roebuck catalogs. Most of our main ingredients for dinner came from the farm. We'd slaughter our own meat. And we generally had geese and chicken on the farm as well as pigs and steers. *(You had to do your own butchering?)* Yeah. You'd have to chop the heads off the chickens. With the geese you'd have to be sure you had the gander instead of the hen. We usually butchered about 2-3 pigs a year. We didn't make bacon, but we always had salt pork.

(What was McHenry like by the time the War got over? Do you remember the men coming home?) Oh, yes. They had Armistice Day — something special for the soldiers.

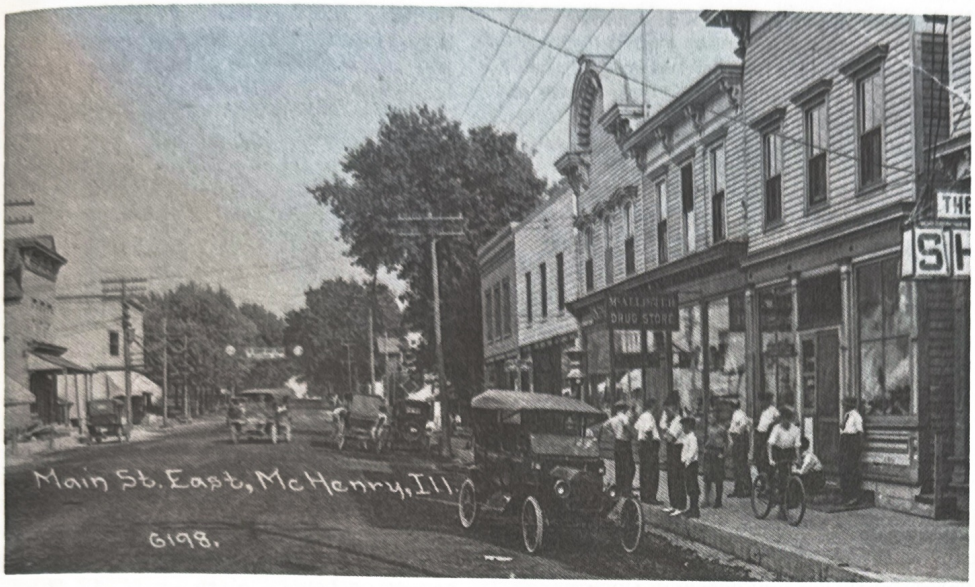
(You've served on various boards, etc. here in McHenry County. You served on the T.B. Association and you were asked to write the McHenry Township History for the 1968 history book — McHenry County. You've spent all your life here in the McHenry area. Has McHenry been good to you and your family?) Oh, yes. Of course, you're getting a lot of strangers into the town now. Back in those days, though, when you met someone on the street you knew he was a local citizen for quite a while, but things have changed. It's a faster pace for everybody. In the old days, people exchanged troubles with one another.

Vivian Bassett

I am Vivian Bassett, my maiden name was Vivian Switzer before I married. I was born in Streator, Illinois and was taken to Texas when I was 1½ years old. I received my schooling in the Houston schools graduating in 1928 from High School. I was married in Houston. I met my husband in Richmond, Illinois at an Uncle's home in March of 1933. Lisle was a blind date arranged by my cousin.

Lisle's father was the postmaster in the West Side Post Office and he had been a government employee since 1905. He was the first rural mail carrier from the West side. The Bassetts bought the home on Main Street in March of 1908 and moved in from the family farm in Ostend. This house was built long before that and I am trying to find the exact date of existence. I have the abstracts and find it was occupied as far back as 1869.

I got into the Methodist Church because my husband was there. One of the interesting things about this church, in doing the church history, I find that Lisle's greatgrandfather,



Street scene of Main Street looking east in West McHenry in the early 1900's.

Rev. John Bassett, who was a member of this church, also dedicated the original building in 1859. He was an ardent worker for the church for thirty years.

(Let's go back to your moving to Main Street in the mid 1930's. That was during the Depression. What do you recall about the Depression?) It was hard because my husband wasn't working, only part-time. There were times when . . . well, one of the beautiful things about that era was you had your local grocer. You could sometimes charge your groceries for the whole winter. If you had work, you paid for it. When you didn't have work, they would carry you. Pete Schaefer was here most of the time we did our shopping.

Main Street was rather a quiet street — lined with Elm trees. It was a beautiful little street. People were neighborly. Of course, all of the neighbors that were here originally have all gone. *(Can you recall any of their names?)* Well, there was Mame Harrison across the way, across the street, and Eddie Buss and Ella. The George Johnson's were across the street, Fannie and Robert Thompson next door to them. The Weber's were not living there when we first came, but they moved in later. That was the Carl Weber's, Stoffels and Wattles.

The church was not as well organized as it is now. It was a very small church, with only part-time ministers. It was interesting to see the different types of people. I felt very lost in this church for the very fact that I came from a big city, and then coming to a small community and not having the activities that I was used to, made it rather difficult. Then the Depression and no money to be able to do anything. *(What did you do during the Depression for entertainment?)* Oh, playing cards with friends. Going to parties and playing cards with friends — going to their houses or they came here. At the time there was the Fox Hole, the Fox Pavillion was done here. We went there for dancing. That's where the roller rink is now. Of course, Lisle had an old-fashioned, '28 Buick, and we were able to get out and go and do what we liked to do — taking a ride, playing cards, and golfing.

(Since you've been here in the early 1930's, you've lived the entire time in the same house on Main Street. Can you recall for us some of the events you've seen — have there been any fires of note?) I think the biggest fire was when the old mill — the feed mill — went down. *(Is that the one on Route 120, that's now the farm service mill?)* The one over here by the railroad tracks. Of course, all of this back here, south of John Street has all been developed since I've come here. When we used to come in the highway there from the south, if it rained hard, you couldn't get through because it flooded so. You see what happened, the mill was located on a creek and when they built that road they covered up a creek that we never knew was there. That was the run-off of the water. The water always stood there a foot to two feet deep, as you came into town. We never could understand how houses could be built here. And of course, the country club was just a small little country club house when I first came here.

An episode of interest that happened at the Country Club was a Capone style robbery. It was a Monday morning in the summer of '36, '37 or '38 (I'm not sure of the date). A car with two men (gangsters) arrived with machine guns and entered the McHenry Club House about 9 a.m. They wanted money but finding little, broke open the slot machines. Lisle's father, Eber, was the secretary of the club and always took the proceeds of the weekend late Sunday night!

The first winter I was here we had a snow storm — now let's see, I won't say the first winter . . . It was in 1936, and we had a blizzard. That was my first experience of real, real bad snow. I never saw snow until I came to Illinois — didn't know what snow was like. We had such snow, we went down to the Country Club and just the roof of the Country Club was showing. That was the old building and it was just one story. Just the peak of the roof was showing. *(How did they clear the snow off the streets?)* They had these push things that pushed in front of it — attached to trucks. It was very inefficient because they weren't strong enough. The railroad got blocked down here and my husband went down and helped to shovel because the snow plow couldn't take the snow off the railroad tracks. They relayed it off, and they spent days trying to get the section between here and Crystal Lake open so the train could get through.

Out here west of town going into Woodstock one year, April 1st, the snow plows had been put away and we had a heavy, heavy snowstorm and no trucks. Nothing could get in or out of town because the snow plows had all been put away. The bumper things had been taken off the front. People came into town in their sleighs — right over the fence tops and everything.

(Did people have any place to stay overnight here?) Oh, yes, we had the old Parker Hotel still going, where Overton's is on the corner of Waukegan and Front Streets. Overton tore that building down. The Northwestern Hotel was an active building at that time. Riverside was an active hotel at that time. There were numerous people in town that took people in. See that was called the tourist homes deal at that time — people could go into people's homes. That was the way travelers did it. There were no motels. Hotels were few and far between. Of course, McHenry was well taken care of. The river people, all kinds of them, along the river, and all those places all had hotels for the summer people that came out. That was one of the things in the summertime, that was a busy bee of a place. In the wintertime it was just nothing — absolutely nothing.

Orchard Beach Hotel on the Fox River in 1912.

One of the first summers that I was here, we took a boat trip up the Chain of Lakes and viewed those beautiful Lotus blossoms. That's one of the things I miss more than anything. You could smell those blossoms just coming near the lake. There was just a sea of them. They cut canals through so little narrow boats could go through. You couldn't pick them, but you could go back to the landing and they would have picked blossoms and each person who took the trip could have a blossom. They sold the lotus perfume that was made from those blossoms. That was up near Fox Lake.

(Did you listen to the radio much?) That was our source. *(What did you listen to?)* Oh, those beautiful bands — the big band era. Well, there was Fibber McGee and I can't remember too many. *(Did you go to the show often?)* Oh, yes, about once a week. You could go for an evening for about 25 cents. You could get an ice cream cone for a nickle at Unti's.

(Do you remember having to ration?) Oh, yes! I ran across a ration book here not too long ago going through some memories. *(What did that mean for people?)* It meant that you had to plan your meals so that you had the proper amount of food. We would save the grease — the bacon

drippings and the grease from the meats, then we could get another pound of butter or another pound of meat or whatever you needed. Sugar was rationed. You couldn't get enough sugar for canning. If you did a lot of canning, sometimes you could get special coupons for that. My husband, being a mail carrier, and having to go back and forth to work, he got a special allotment for gasoline. One of the things about the ration book — we had grandma Bassett and she didn't use an awful lot, she wasn't eating an awful lot. If it hadn't been for that . . . we got the children's shoes with her rations. Because you were rationed on how many pairs of shoes you could buy — you had coupons for that. Gasoline, oil . . . you were rationed on all of your fats. You had to exchange. Either go without butter and get a pound of meat, or get a pound of butter and go without meat. That's how serious it was.

(Where did you have to go for the books? City Hall?) It seems to me like we had to go to Woodstock. You had to say how many were in your family. The age group that was there. That was how you got your coupons accordingly. Each one of us had a book. I had one, my husband had one, each of the children had one, the grandmother had one — each one had a book. You could interchange your coupons. It all depends upon your age how many you got.

(That lasted all through the second World War?) Yes, all through the war. The fact of the matter is I can't remember when they went back to non-rationing.

(Do you recall when the war started?) Yes, I can remember Pearl Harbor better than I can when the war ended. That was on a Sunday, and I had the radio turned on, my husband was in the living room reading the newspaper and I had the radio on in the kitchen while I was cooking Sunday dinner. When I heard it, it was really a shocker. They let the schools out and sent the kids home to listen on their radios when Roosevelt declared war.

(Do you recall what it was like when the war ended?) Well, the day it ended I was in the hospital. I do know that people didn't believe it. My roommate was an English girl who was a war bride who had come back to the States, and she couldn't believe it either. It was interesting to learn her point of view of the American soldier over there and that part of her understanding of what the Americans had done for the English people. I do know there was great jubilation but the people were afraid to believe it was over with. It wasn't over in Germany, it was over when the bomb was dropped — in Japan. I remember the people thought it was a horrible thing to do, but then it was later that the eastern part took place. It isn't very vivid in my mind. I guess I didn't want to remember — I was glad it was over.

We were saying today that our society has changed so because over in our church organizations, women are not there because they are out working. Where in our time, women were always home. Always available. We were putting on dinners and doing things of that sort — can you imagine a chicken dinner for 35 cents! But then a grocery store would give you some of the rations, and the farmers would bring in the chickens. We did everything from scratch. There was no frozen or packaged foods you could buy. There were no freezers to put your food into. You had to do everything by canning. It was a different world. I don't know if I'd want to go back to it or not. It's rather convenient the way it is. But there were a lot of advantages. Home life was a lot closer, I think.

Why, even our church has changed. I used to know everybody who came to church, and now you don't know many. One eccentric lady lived over there near the VFW hall. She lived in a little shanty. She had no electricity. The VFW, because she kept watch — she was like a watchdog for them, they strung a line over and gave her a one light extension cord so she had a light. She would walk clear across from over the river to church here. She worked for people. She would be gaudily dressed — you'd think she was a gypsy.

Nellie Bacon, next door, had the bacon nook down here where the paint shop is now (on the West side.) The Art Smith's grocery store was there next to it. Not too much has changed. For instance, the post office was in where the educational building is now. Pete Justen furniture store was in there. There was no funeral director home. The embalming and everything was taking place in the little room in back of the furniture store. It was either in the home or the church where the funerals were held.

Lisle worked out of the post office on the West side. His father said the whole block burned in 1905. Lisle said in 1928 he came into town and that whole block was on fire. That was on the north side of Main Street. He just happened to come into town one evening and he said everything was just ablaze. Dad Bassett had said there was a fire earlier and they lost everything in the post office. The stamps and everything were all gone. He got some of the papers out of the post office and was able to determine how much he had in the post office of value.

I think one of the saddest disasters was when a man killed himself. That was in '36, I think it was. He was a clerk in the post office and Lisle went down to see how things were. The clerk wasn't in the post office and when he opened up the drawer, for some reason Lisle thought something was wrong. He opened the drawer where the gun was kept, and the gun was gone. The clerk had taken it. He was a war veteran.

(Overall, did you enjoy living in McHenry?) It had its challenges! McHenry wasn't as well stocked for stores when I first came here. You had a hat shop, a variety of shoe stores. You could always go in and you had your little markets and meat markets where you could go and pick out your meats, like Pries' Meat Market and like that. You had a variety of dime stores. Over the years I think our stores increased and then all of a sudden, we lost everything. I think we are rather isolated compared to what we were back then. You really have to go out of town now to shop for most everything you want. You have dress shops, but you don't have the variety. Betty Nielsen had her shop over on Riverside Drive. You'd tell her what you wanted and she'd go into Chicago and do the shopping for you. That's sometimes how you got your clothes. She'd bring out a variety of clothes and then you'd pick out what you wanted.

Right now I'd say I'm satisfied because we have a nice community. It's quiet. We aren't having the race riots and things that are going on in cities. I've noticed that Houston is having its problems, as well as Chicago and all of the other towns. Overall, I'm really pretty happy to have lived my life here.

Soldier's marching in a parade in the 1920's past City Hall which is shown on the right. In the background to the left is the sheep shed off Landmark School.

Mr. Alvan Baur

My dad came from Rhinelander, Germany. He came over in 1891. My mother came from Germany in 1889. They met in Johnsburg and got married in Chicago. They went farming for about 15 to 20 years. First they were in Volo, then Lily Lake and then they moved to McHenry to Riverside Drive. *(How did they get from farming to operating a tavern?)* Well, his folks were in the wine business in Germany, and his grandfather was a winemaker, his dad was a winemaker. Along the Mosel Valley in Germany. They had vineyards running up the mountain.

(Where was the tavern located?) On Riverside Drive across the street from Bimbo's. It used to be Al Barbian's grocery store, years ago. From there we moved to the west side. Next to Buss's garage, where the parking lot is there. We were there a couple of years. *(Did he run a tavern there as well?)* That's right.

Then we moved across the street where Walt Freund Tire shop is. My Dad and Mother

had a restaurant there for a year or two. That's where my younger brother was born, Bud. *(Do you remember anything about the restaurant?)* Only the Gypsies coming into town. There were three covered wagons with Gypsies in there. My brother, Joe, he was older than I was, he ran next door to the harness store, and told them that the Gypsies were in town. Where darn near in walked two women Gypsies. One was a big, heavyset one. He told them to get out. He had all harnesses hanging along the walls and had a circle there where all the whips were hung. He grabbed one of these whips and hit her over the butt. She left there. I can still see those three Gypsy wagons, up there hooked up to the horse railings where they used to tie up the horses. *(Why didn't people want the Gypsies around?)* They'd steal everything they could get ahold of.

From there we moved down to the end of Waukegan street. *(This would be down passed where the old hospital was?)* Right. Then my dad started in the ice business in about 1917 or 1918.

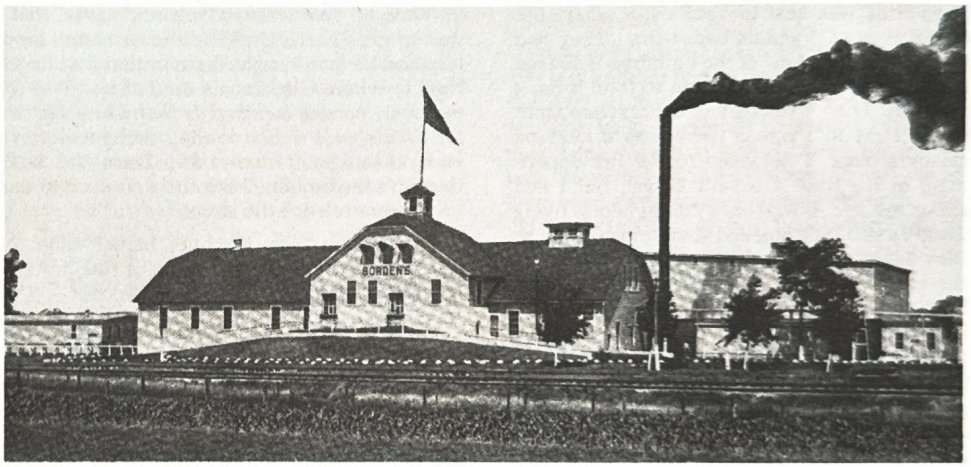
(He worked first out at Brandt, out in McCullom Lake. Then how did he get into McHenry?) Well, the Brewery had an ice house right behind George Justen's funeral home. This was on the Mill Pond, located right in the middle of McHenry. Toward the bridge there. Toward George Justen's. It was right behind George Justen's. *(Was the building standing, or did you dad build it?)* No, that was standing. The Brewery used to fill it up years ago, for their own use. Then from Waukegan street, we moved over to Third street, down by the Mill Pond. Where Mister's is now.

At that time there was Borden's ice house down by the railroad tracks, on the west end. And, on the east end, across the pond from us, Unti's had an ice house. We cut ice there from about 1920 to 1929, I think it was. 1929 was when they drained it out, I think.

(When you say they cut ice, how did they cut ice? How many men had to work on it and do you remember any of the people who used to cut ice for your dad?) There was Al Purvey and a couple of Bickler boys, and Thurwells, Conways, Meyer boys, L. Bassett, Pete Freund. The only last one I can remember working down there that is still around is Jake Freund's son, Vic Freund. He used to drive the team of horses for us. It used to take about three teams of horses to pull up the ice. We'd hook on to about 8 cakes and run up and get at the end and hook it and run right down again another seven or eight cakes of ice. The next team would pull it up. So we would just go around like that.

(How did you know when the ice was ready?) Well, we'd always wait until there was about eight, ten inches thick, on account of the water being so still, it used to freeze a lot thicker. Because on the river, or where water flows, it don't thicken up as fast as when the pond is quiet, or no flow. We used to have to cut it 22" x 22". We had to go over each line three times because the horse had already gone, could only cut down about three inches — that's about all a horse could pull.

(What happened to the ice after it was put into the ice house? What kept it cold all that time?) Well, the walls were 8" thick. They were filled up with shavings. We used to put slough hay on top of the ice, about a foot. Slough hay would not break up to dirty the ice. Up north they used shavings to put on the ice because they don't sell it like we used to. We used to have to wash off the hay every once and a while. But the walls were 8" thick with those shavings in there why, during the whole summer it wouldn't melt over a foot from the walls up to the ice. In the middle of August, why, most of the time one of them would be all the way empty and the other one would be down to near the bottom.



Borden's Milk Factory located on Borden Street, presently occupied by Tonyan Construction Company.

(You said your Dad went out of business there about the time the Mill Pond was drained?) Well, after we could not cut ice there anymore because 120 and 31 come through there. My dad gave the city of McHenry 2 acres of land for a dollar. (Baur Avenue) Where the bridge come through was right out where we used to cut the ice. So, we couldn't cut ice there no more. In about '29, they drained it.

(Was that a political issue then. Were there strong feelings about draining or not draining the pond?) No, it wasn't. It was Kent, Klontz and Tony Freund and Mosher — there were about five or six of them that bought the land from Bordon's Milk Company. They were going to subdivide it. That's when they drained it out. I think it was about 1928 or 1929 — somewhere's in there.

Then the ice house — well, lightning hit it twice and burned it down, and my dad took down the big one, but let the little one. So we used to fill the little one. Because refrigeration was coming in so fast and artificial ice was being made in Woodstock. They were 400-pound cakes. Unti started in the ice business too. It was called McHenry Artificial Ice Company. He had that for about two years and then my brother bought him out.

(Let me ask you some questions about some of the things that you might recall about McHenry or your life here. For example, do you remember when you got a telephone? Did your parents have one?) We had one about 1918 — that was when we lived down on Waukegan Street. When we moved over here, I remember our telephone number was 94R, when we lived on the Mill Pond. *(Did most of your neighbors have telephones at that time?)* Yes, I'd say about 80%. *(Were they mostly party lines?)* No. *(Mrs. Baur:)* Sure they were. They were all that way at first. *(Mr. Baur:)* Oh, I remember. *(Did you have two rings, or one ring, Mrs. Bauer?)* I remember that. We had that too. Maybe because we were in business, we were the only one on that line. I know the homes did. They were all party lines as far as I can remember.

(Do you remember some of the older stores here in town where you used to trade — some that stand out in your mind.) What side of town do you want to go on? *(Well, let's go over on Riverside Dr.)* Well, there was Huck's on the corner, on the corner of Riverside Dr. and Elm Street where Jake's had a tavern there, kitty-corner from the hotel. *(Okay, that would be the southwest corner of Elm and Riverside Drive. What was that, a grocery store?)* Yep, a grocery store. Right across from the Fred Justen Hotel, Stillings had a garage, next to them Bishop had a barber shop — on the west side of Riverside Drive going north. Then Barbian's was in there. Joe Miller was on the corner of Pearl. *(Mrs. Baur:)* It was more like a drygoods store and a grocery store. Like a country store. *(Mr. Baur:)* That was on the corner of Pearl Street and Riverside Drive. Then across the street was Bickler's. *(Was that a tavern?)* No, a hotel and restaurant. And across the street — to the east of that was Knox's garage. He sold Ford motor cars. Next to him was Nieson's restaurant — that's going north, on the east side of the street. Then we come back south of that on the corner was a guy by the name of John Buch had a tavern in there and then next to that was Johnny Karl's restaurant. Now we're coming back south towards the hotel. Next to Johnny Karl's was Joe Engle. He had a hardware store in where Bimbo's and that other store is now. He had both of those stores there for a hardware store. And after that, where the barber shop is, that used to be a driveway down to the river. And Joe Rothermal built a boat shop there. It was down at the river not up by the sidewalk like it is today.

(You mention boat houses and boat companies. McHenry had a number of boat companies. Did most of the people who lived here in McHenry have boats, or were they people from out of the area who came out for the summers?) Mostly summer resort people. *(Mrs. Baur:)* Yes, because most of the cottages along the river were summer cottages. *(Mr. Baur:)* They'd only be out here for two to three months. Every night, why, it would be one car right after another. We used to have a couple of cabs in town. Ben Adams was the cab man.

Then going up to Centerville . . .*(This would be the Green Street area.)* . . . Green Street running to Waukegan. Why, on the northeast corner was Unti's Ice Cream Parlor. *(Mrs. Baur:)* Where the jewelry shop is. *(Mr. Baur:)* Then right across the street on the northwest corner Wells had a home there where McHenry State Bank is now. He had an office in his home. He was a doctor. Across the street on the southeast corner was Pries's butcher shop and grocery store. Next to him was the post office, then before it burned down, Smith brothers had a store there and Mrs. Barbian had a dress store. Marshalls had a bakery shop there — where Barb's gift/cards is now. Next to them was a little shoe store, in later years Joe Freund ran it. Then Brda was next to Vycitals — where the tavern is now. Vycitals had it first. They had two stores there. One of the buildings belonged to Mr. Owen. He rented it out to John Brda, a tinsmith. Then Vycitals had a hardware store there. Next to Vycitals there was a clothing cleaners place. I belonged to the fire department at the time. I wasn't 21 yet, but I lied about my age, I was only 20. Someone living upstairs said they smelled something funny, so they called the fire department. We went over there. We broke open the back window on the back porch. A guy was hanging in the clothes closet. He had been dead about 4 to 6 days. I'll never forget that smell as long as I live.

Next to him was the A&P Store — there's a cake baking place in there now. Then there used to be a driveway in between that and there was a little pool room next to that. Then there was a drainage channel that came through there. Next to that was the showhouse. Next to that there was a little building next to the showhouse and Boone crick. Then the bridge — just go over the bridge toward Waukegan Street, on the corner there Peter Schower had his blacksmith shop in his house. Then we go across the street where the old city hall was — now we're on the west side and we're going back north. The city used to have a grandstand where McHenry Savings and Loan is. Then up past where Gladstone's was, that was where Charlie Unti had the ice cream factory and ice house right there in that building. Next to where Gladstone's used to be. *(Was it that long, narrow building? Is that where Unti's Ice Cream used to be?)* Well, I thought it was wider than what it is now. *(Mrs. Baur:)* Yes, but that isn't the building back there. It used to be up in front toward the street.

Peter B. Freund Store in West McHenry where the former Wattles Drug Store was located. The School Administration is now in that location. Farmers in the wagon were probably waiting for the train to arrive.

Next to him was Kirchner barber shop. I don't remember what the name of that tavern is now — used to be My Place. Oh, yes — it's St. Regis. Then still going north was a fire in a bakery shop there that burned down. That's where Carey Electric is, and Smith. Next to that was the Bell Telephone exchange. Women were in there working the switchboards — at that time they had all women. That's where the drapery shop is now. Next to that was a couple different banks, Fox Valley Bank and People's Bank. They all went under during the Depression. Then there's Bolger's Drug Store and Justen's Furniture and Undertaking Parlor on the corner.

(This would have been all around what period of years approximately?) Oh, from 1920 to 1940.

Now, do you want to go on the west side? *(Mrs. Baur:)* Let's see what we can remember there. Well, Erickson's was where the apartment building is now, on the northeast corner of Main and Route 31. Erickson had a grocery store there. Well, an everything store. A country store. Across the street on the south, Art Smith's grocery store. Then next to him a guy by the name of Pop had a shoe store there. Going east. There's a barber shop in there now. Going west across the street from Erickson's, Smith had a barber shop in there and a two-lane bowling alley upstairs, where Christopher's is now. *(There was a bowling alley upstairs?)* Yes — two lanes. Next to him was Stoffel & Reihansperger Insurance Company. Then there was Walsh's grocery store and next to him was Frett's Meat Market. Pete Frett was mayor at one time of McHenry. Next to him was Wattles Drug Store. Next to that was McHenry State Bank and Pete Justen had his funeral home and furniture store next to the Post Office that burned down in 1923 I think it

Workmen widening and paving Riverside Drive in the early 1930's. View is looking north on Riverside Drive.

was. Althoff's was next to that — it also burned down in that fire. That was before the building of Buss' Garage. There was a big vacant lot in between there. Next to that we used to call it the Brown House. I don't know why but that's where my Dad had his tavern. And next to him was Teddy Schiessel's tavern. *(Is that where the glassware place is now?)* Yeah, right on the corner. Then across the alley was Alexander Lumber company. Across the railroad tracks was McHenry Artificial Stone company — that's where the electrical shop is now.

Down on Crystal Lake Road on the corner was McHenry Lumber Company, owned by Covalt. Across the street, on the south side working our way east was Spencer's Mill. The old flour mill. Farmers used to come in from Woodstock and all over because they didn't have any in Woodstock. They'd bring their wheat there to make flour. Now going back up the street to the depot. Then you had Northwestern Hotel, then next store was Weber's house. A big house which has been moved over on Route 31 and John street on the corner. Then Walt Freund was in there and Commell's had a hardware store there. Jake Stoffel's father had a grocery store next to him. Then Joe Freund's Clothing Store and then next to him, where the Chinese Restaurant is now, Plum Garden, was Nye's jewelry store. Then next door was another barber shop. And on the corner was Steve Heimer's tavern — the only tavern in town that sold beer during the prohibition. *(That's a wonderful recollection of all those businesses!)* Oh, yes. At one time there were six blacksmith shops in McHenry. There was Matt Freund, John Pine, Peter Schower, Ipsh, Joe May, and Matt Laures.

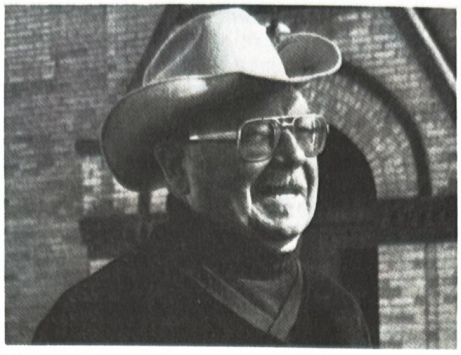
(Where did you go to school?) Landmark. *(Remember any of your teachers?)* Oh, sure! Mrs. Claxson, Mrs. McGee, Nellie Doherty, Mary Kinney, Mrs. Barrow, Foley — she was Miss Phalin when we had her. That's when the high school was over in Landmark. The toilets were outside. *(So you went to high school before it was East Campus?)* I didn't go to high school. But at that time it was all in Landmark school. Basketball was played outside. Then they built on a couple of annex places between the city hall and the school for the high school. Then about four or five years later they built the new high school (East Campus).

(Do you remember any of the city bands. Did they have concerts on a regular basis?) Sure — right down there where McHenry Savings and Loan is. Schaeffer's dad used to play in it. I used to know a lot of them. Huppy Shore used to play in it.

(How did you happen to meet your wife?) We went to school together.

(Mrs. Baur, you were a Kramer?) Yes, I was born up at Orchard Beach. My folks met in Chicago. My Dad was already living out here but he met her in Chicago and they were married in Chicago and came out to Orchard Beach. That's where they lived until I was 12 years old. Then we moved into the house next to Windhill's. Then the boat shop had been turned into a house. Someone across the river had bought the property and he made the boat shop into a house.

(What would you say about McHenry? Are you glad you made it your home?) Oh, yes! I don't think I'd want to live anyplace else. We gripe about the weather but when you hear about what happens around the country, we're better off here than anyplace else.



Earl Marty Conway

My mother and dad got married in 1900 and they lived down in Terra Cotta. You know where Gracy Road is, down south of McHenry? It was in what we called Irish Prairie down that way. *(How far did Irish Prairie extend?)* Well, Irish Prairie, I'd say extended, oh, let me see now, pretty close to Gracy's Road. I would say that would be more or less the cutoff on this end of it. Bull Valley Road and Route 31 and the River, as far south as Gracy Road.

(Where did you go to school then?) The school here in Irish Prairie. There was a school house right up here at the corner of Green Street and Bull Valley Road. It was on the southwest corner. I don't know who the people are who live there now. That was our Irish Prairie School. That was not the first one, though. The first one was down a little bit there, well, south, and a little bit further south of where we are now, on Barreville Road. That road when it first came out of McHenry, used to be called Elgin Road. Elgin Road went as far as what we call Bull Valley Road, and then you had to turn over onto what is Route 31 now. Right there on the corner, where the church is, or close to where that garage is now, from there on to McHenry, there was no road. That road didn't come in there until about 1928. And then it was called Route 60. It went all the way down to Terra Cotta and Crystal Lake. That's when that came in, and later on the numbers were changed, of course. When you went to Crystal Lake you had to take Green Street up to Bull Valley Road, over to west of 31, and then to Crystal Lake. You could not go right straight north. It was all farming area. That's what made it so nice about it.

(You went to Prairie School. Do you remember any of your classmates or teachers, or what the school day was like?) Yes, I do, I do. The school teachers I had, they were Knox girls then. They are all gone now, they all died. One was Genevieve, she was one of the last ones. Genevieve, she taught out there, and she had a sister Marguerite. She had another sister Dorothy, Dorothy Weber. She was quite a piano and organ player. When I was a kid, about 5-6 years old, and that old school they used to have a lot of basket socials, and the young ladies in the Irish Prairie every once in a while, the girls about 17, 18, 19, up there like that, and they'd always make up a basket of fruit and sandwiches and the likes of that and whatnot and then this certain night they'd have a party up at school. They would run these basket socials. They'd raffle off, auction them off, these baskets. Naturally, the guys who would kind of like those girls, at that time they would go up to 7-8 bucks, you know. At parties like that, that's where I first started singing. Dorothy Weber, she was a Knox, played the piano for me. One of the first songs I ever sang was, "If I knocked the 'l' out of Kelly, he'd knock the hell out of me"!

(Who were some of your classmates?) Of course, my sister Nancy was one, my sister Mabel, Cecilia, Daisy we called her, my other sister Jimmie we called her, her name was Theresa, my brother was young. Other classmates, there were some McCabe's. There's only one that I know is living right now, her name is Lucy McCabe. They used to be on a farm out there. There's another fella, his name was Hildy Hansen.

(When you went to town for shopping, for goods and so forth, where did your folks shop?) There was a store by the name of Bolander's. He had what was called a dry-goods store at that time. It was located out there right on the corner of Main Street and 31, on the northeast corner. It was later Howard Wattle's apartments. I don't know if Howard Wattles still owns that or not. Mr. Bolander had a store on the bottom, and on top was a dance hall. That was called Stoffel's Hall, because Simon Stoffel was the owner of the building at that time. They'd hold dances, they were far and few in between, but when they did hold dances they had a lot of masquerade dances.

(Where did you go to church?) St. Patricks. Oh, that was another thing I forgot about. Down on the farm we had a surrey, and my friend Pat McCabe, he had fringe on his surrey. I think he pulled his with two horses. They surrey we had we pulled with one horse. There would have been about six of us going to church. The old St. Patrick's Church, it was located where the cemetery was, right off the parking lot. Those were the days, you know.

On Saturday nights we would have to take our baths. In decent weather, we'd go out in the woodshed. The cleanest one would go first. Dad would be the one who had to give us the bath. Sunday, of course, we had to go to church. Mother would say, "Now put on your Sunday suit, and see that your shoes are shined". So we'd all go to church in our Sunday clothes, and then when we came home we'd take off our Sunday suit. You put it away until next week, and you didn't wear that to school or anyplace else. *(Who were some of the priests who were there at that time?)* I was going to tell you about this one. Father MacEvoy, who is the one I remember. He came there somewhere in the neighborhood of 1914. He died in 1925, no 1926, someplace in there. I was about 14, I guess, in eighth grade. He invited me over to his house, and he wanted me to sing in the choir. I thought hey, that was pretty good, a kid fourteen years old gets to sing in the choir, although before that my sisters had sung in the choir.

(About how old were you when you moved into McHenry?) I was born in McHenry. I was about 4 or 5 years old when we moved to the farm. When we moved back into McHenry, I was about 10. *(Where did you go to school?)* I went to grade school right over here at Landmark School. At the time that I landed there I was in fourth grade. I had Mrs. Foley. Her name then was Eleanor Phalin. We had the table of fours at that time at the old Prairie School. When I got to McHenry they were way ahead up there on the tables of eight, so I had a little hard time, so I had to go to fourth grade two years. We came here in about March. That was the time when most all the farmers changed farms or

places of living and so on. *(Do you remember any of the other teachers?)* Oh yes, Miss Doherty was in there, and Miss Phalin, and the one I remember very much was Mrs. Bob Thompson. Bob worked at the McHenry Lumber Company. Her name then was Fanny Granger. She was one of the old residents. Her uncle, (his name was Gage), started things booming around here in McHenry. She had another sister, I forget her name. As time went on, we had Alice Knox and Minnie Knox. Another one we had was Mary Bonselett. She has a brother still living down here in the Country Club area. He lives next to Eddie Buss. The other one was Mary Kinne. She spent 33 years in the same room, teaching eighth grade. The teachers from then were dedicated. I went to school under 'Prof. Nye''. He ran a jewelry store down in West McHenry and his son also had the Harvard Paper — Lowell. He was a superintendent. Right after him a fellow by the name of Tredway came. He was there until Mr. Duker. Duker was there for a long time. There was another fellow by the name of Talmadge, who played the flute. He was the one who also helped get me interested in music. I got through the school, in about 1924, that's when they started the orchestra in the school. We had a bandmaster by the name of Professor William Sears. He came from Barrington. He had McHenry, Woodstock and Crystal Lake. He specialized in cornet and violin. When he was a kid ten years old, he used to play in saloons for a couple of dollars. He was really good. He was also our band master for the 35-piece McHenry Band.

(Can you tell us anything about the teams, were you on any of the old baseball teams?) I never played much baseball. My specialty was basketball. I was a freshman, playing in the old Landmark School. We had a coach by the name of Stringer. He just died about a year or so ago. I started when I was only a freshman, and I wasn't on the first team. I started shooting with one hand, and he said if you don't cut that out I'm going to bench you and kick you off the team. That amuses me because now you never see people shooting with two hands on the ball.

(Did you and your wife go to the same school?) My wife is five years younger than I am. When she was a freshman in school I had just graduated. Her name was Helen Weber.

(What was your courtship like? Did you go to the dances?) The old Fox Pavilion back in 1925, was on Lincoln Road just before you get to the bend by where you go to Hilltop School, back in the woods. We used to call Mike Conway's woods, and this is where Clarence Neissen, Jimmie Doherty and, I think, Leo Heimer, built this Fox Pavilion. It was a big dance hall during the Prohibition days. It was boarded up from the outside, and when they had the dances they would pull off the boards and it would be all screened in. They had wooden benches all around the outside and this is where boy met girl. They'd charge 50 cents to get in and 10 cents a dance. *(Did they have live music there?)* Yes, they had a five-piece band the first time I remember. At that time we thought it was a pretty good band. You'd see a young lady there, ask her to dance, and give the woman your ticket.

My wife, Helen, was too young then to go to dances. We didn't go to many dances, but we did go to movies a lot. This is the time when you could buy a bottle of Pepsi for a dime and a hamburger for 15 cents. I generally always managed to have 50 cents in my pocket all the time. I had an old Willis-Knight car, with three doors. That's the way they were built. Before that we had a 1926 Chevrolet, with the side-curtains out of it, so we had it plastered up with Prince Albert signs to keep the rain and snow out. We had that for a while when we were courting.

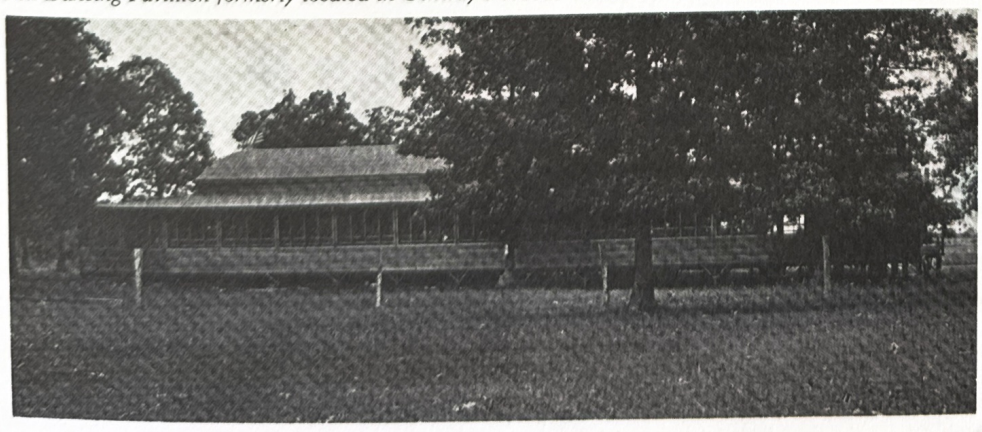
(Would you tell us about the Mill Pond in McHenry?) I remember that Mill Pond when I was real young. I don't think I was much older than three years old. I remember Russell Turner used to be a good skater and he'd take us kids for a ride on the Mill Pond. We lived back by where the Admiral is now, in the house they used to call the Clover Dryer. The water came all the way up to there, around right back where Route 120 and 31 is now, on the west side of that road. Before they put that road in, of course, the water wound around right in back of the Landmark School. There was a road, they call it Fourth Street now. There was a plank walking path between the Owen House and Landmark School. Where McHenry Savings Bank is now, there was a little path so you could walk through there. Right beyond the Owen's House and Landmark School was the dam. The dam was about 50 or 75 feet, which held the water back from going down into the creek. Below that was all rocks. That spilled over and went down where the bridge is now. That pond continued on around north, back as far as the Tonyan Construction Company is now — that used to be the Borden's Company. That was a wonderful place to go skating. Helen and I used to skate there a lot. I think it was around about 1930 or 31 when Route 120 and 31 went through, and they filled that all in.

That kind of divided the town to a certain extent. At first they called it the Venetian Gardens, when Kent and Company was here before the Depression hit. There was only one house on the north end. After that it started up again and they drained it down and put the road through. This would be about 1929. They finished the 120 bridge up about 1927 and I worked on it, a kid of 18. I'd just got out of high school.

(There were a lot of taverns and a lot of slot machines in McHenry, weren't there?) I don't remember any during Prohibition, but after they repealed the Volstead Act, everybody went crazy. . They'd open up little joints, taverns, and sell nickel beers and so on. Then a little while after that was when they started in with the slot machines. People went a little goofy because those machines were all over, in drug stores and some grocery stores, not only taverns. It was quite an income for people for a long time, and a lot of those slot machines paid the rent.

(How long were you at Landmark?) I was there until 1956 as custodian. That's when the Junior High School was built. So I had to leave old Landmark School. I was given the job as custodian at the Jr. High School. I was with the school system itself about 32½ years. After I left old Landmark School and went to the Jr. High School, Schoenholtz was the principal there, and I worked there until 1962, when I had a heart attack. I was out for about six weeks. When I got all set, Mr. Buckner, who got to be superintendent, and a couple of board members said, "We've got to find a place for Marty, he's been with us for a long time." So I got to be supervisor of the custodians and buildings and made rounds. I kept that job for a few years and then they built Parkland School in 1971. The year before they opened it up, they asked me if I would be the custodian supervisor of Parkland School, at the same wages. I got to thinking well, okay. I was really happy about my work at the schools.

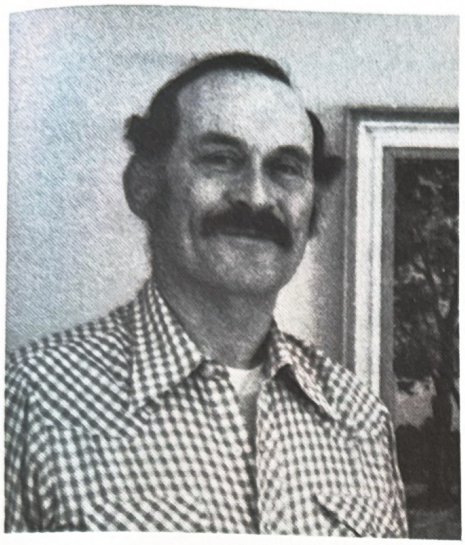
Fox Dancing Pavillion formerly located in Conway's Woods on the east side of Lincoln Road.



Mr. Lee Cooney

The Cooney family moved to Hartland in McHenry County in about 1850 from Kinderhook, New York, where they worked for Martin Van Buren as cattle drovers and were in charge of the farm in general. They originally settled down where the Spring Hill shopping mall is, and were run out of there by the Germans and driven to the Irish settlement in Hartland. In those days it was very interesting, the racial disagreements, shall we say. At that time it was great sport for the Irish to go from Hartland to Johnsburg to pick a fight, or vice versa, depending upon the status. In any case, Martin Cooney established his farm, not too far from the railroad station, and the Cooney brothers also ran the saloon in Hartland. And, at one period, in the early 1900's, a John Cooney was shot in a fight over a woman in that given saloon.

Prior to that, in 1866, Martin Cooney, one of the original settlers, was hit over the head just a few yards from the railroad station and killed for the money he had collected from the sale of a carload of cattle belonging to him and his neighbors. So, McHenry County has had its occasional violence for a good many years.



My Dad ultimately moved to South Dakota where he homesteaded land from 1910 to 1936 when he moved back to McHenry. There are a couple of interesting characters in the family tree, one a Michael Kelter who at one time was an alderman in the city of McHenry, and I believe the town clerk. There are a couple of subdivisions in town primarily on Washington Street and some on the northern edges of Richmond Road that are indeed Kelter's additions to McHenry. His business primarily was land development and a building contractor. He built quite a few of the one-room schools that were around in this immediate area — one at the corner of Crystal Lake Road and Bull Valley Road — Clemens School. And I know that he built the one that is on the curve on River Road approximately two miles out, going south along the river, on the east side of the river. *(Emerald Park?)* South of there, past the Sutton Farm and where the old road to the dam was.

The most memorable thing that I can recall that Mike built, as my Dad told me; before the concrete bridge over the river at Johnsburg was built on Chapel Hill Road, there was a timber bridge there, that was more like a Union Pacific Railroad bridge, and Mike built that because he learned that when he was in California in the 1850's. He was quite a contractor, really.

His son, J. B. Kelter, was what my Dad used to refer to as a big fish in a small pond in McHenry here in the 1930's. Back when the bank was unable to cash the milk checks for the farmers because it didn't have enough currency in the bank, J. B. would make a weekly trip to the Northern Trust in Chicago and get enough cash to make those checks good. He would cash the checks in the front lobby of the bank. *(How could he do that?)* With the permission of the bank, because they flat out didn't have the money to cash the Pure Milk Association checks. There wasn't that much money in the bank. *(Was this the West McHenry Bank at that time?)* Yes, that's right.

He also lent money to the party that owned what is now Whispering Oaks subdivision and was forced to foreclose on that particular mortgage. Oddly enough, that was a land developer not a farmer that he lent money to. I have seen the plats of that subdivision and you could lay them over the blueprints of the subdivision that is there now and not tell the difference. Things don't change much. There is also, where Cooney Heights subdivision is, a foundation for what was to be a T.B. Sanitarium. Those footings were poured in about 1928 or '29. They are, and I've seen them, approximately 4 feet wide and about 3 feet thick. And they are still there, if you fly over in the summertime, you can see the outline of that foundation approximately under Mrs. Bassi's house and Lamb's house on South Street in Cooney Heights. *(What ever happened to it?)* Well, it's like so many things in the late 1920's, they just went belly-up.

Previously I mentioned that my Father had homesteaded land in South Dakota in 1910, and he lived there until 1936 when he came back to McHenry. The reason being that he, like so many farmers, had lost his farm to the Depression and the dust storms, bank closings, etc. in that era. He moved back to McHenry, and he began to work the farm which is commonly known as the Hanly Farm, to us, or now where Whispering Oaks subdivision is. The house stood approximately 200 feet or 300 feet in that area northeast of the present branch bank of the McHenry State Bank is now.

I was the ripe old age of four when we moved there, but I do remember the house, and in spite of the fact that most everyone in town thinks it was a super great house, it really wasn't all that much inside. The frame or the structure of the building was solid brick; it was three courses of brick thick, layed up in what is called the Flemish Bond for a bricklayer. It had quoins on the corners, had two bay windows on what would be the southwest side. When I was small there was a screened-in porch between those two windows, over the front door and the front steps. And there was also a porch all the way across the upper story which was screened in.

The most unusual feature of the house was a cupola on the top, which if I can remember correctly, measured 10 x 10. You could see for a great distance in all directions. In his prime, Mr. Hanly owned practically everything from the intersection of Crystal Lake Road and Route 120 to Bull Valley Road on the northeast side of Crystal Lake Road. To make a fancy point here, Crystal Lake Road runs southwest — not south, or west. It's 45 degrees.

(When you looked southwest, what would you see from where the Hanly house was located?) You would see what we referred to as the Rossman Farm and the Kilday Farm. Slightly further you could see the Whiting's Farm which is just past Whispering Oaks. The Kilday Farm buildings are completely gone.

(Now it seems that Mr. John Kelter was quite an important person around this area. Did you know him personally?) Well, he died in 1940, and I was eight years old at that time. *(Do you have much of a recollection of him?)* Oddly enough, he used to come to the farm, and he'd pick me up and we'd drive all over God's creation with him in his car, for company I suppose. But he was at that time 76 or 77 years old. He made his fortune, if you will, selling things as routine as druggist bottles, corks, boxes and general small sundries of that nature. From what my Dad has told me he would make two selling trips a year. He would get on the train in Chicago and go through Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California and back through Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas, Minnesota and Wisconsin. He would be gone four to five months. He then would come home, compile his list of orders, and then he'd go out in Chicago and buy the entire production of a bottle company and a box company for an entire year. He would then get back on the train and go into the upper areas of the eastern states up into Michigan, northern Ohio, New York State, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and even into the lower parts of Canada and then come back. He would sell all of that, and then he would get busy and deliver it.

(As you are coming down to McHenry, what did McHenry look like at that time?) Well, starting at the Hanly house going towards town — doing it backwards, there wouldn't be anything until you came to the end of the gravel to the concrete which was the end of Crystal Lake Road and the street. The first house there was Bill Spencer who ran the mill down at the base of the hill. *(Okay, you're on your way to school.)* As you proceed toward town past Bill Spencer's house, the next house you'd see, and oddly enough there was a sidewalk there, was where Bernie Matchen lived for so many years, or still does in the concrete block house at that point which, if memory serves me right, that's a 1920's house. Further down was the building that eventually became Adam's Laundry for some length of time and directly across from there was Dave Seigel's place. Dave was the scrap dealer. There were piles of scrap iron and junk beyond belief piled up all around the yard and everywhere else that you could imagine. From there there wasn't anything at all until you came to the mill, on the other side of the street where Mr. Spencer worked and ran the mill.

You then crossed a little tiny bridge where there was a culvert, a cement culvert that went under the road, a ditch that now runs along side George Freund's, and the lumberyard, Covalt's lumber yard was on the other side of the street, across from the mill. You then would walk all the way to the corner where, at this point in time, is a hotdog stand, that was Rose Wirtz's gas station. It had the pumps out front that you had to pump the gasoline up into the glass chamber in the top to fill it. Dick Hester had a gas station immediately across the way. On the other side, if you crossed the railroad, you didn't have to cross Rt. 120 at that point, if you didn't want to, was Fleming Implement, which was a tumble down orange building of rather nondescript quality. From there was a house where Mamie Buss lives now. It's in that area that I would cross the street. There were some fairly nice houses at that time where George Thompson's Insurance is now, those were some rather nice homes.

The building where Admiral was for so long, did not exist. *(There was nothing there?)* No. That came somewhat later. The small house that is next to the Admiral Building where Redwanz lives now, behind that was Adam's Laundry. They later moved up the hill aways.

Now, if you crossed what is now the extension of Front Street, there was nothing there. Then there was the Anderson Barbeque, etc. From there there was nothing to the Sinclair Station on the corner, except Matt Bauer's House and Ice House left over from before the Mill Pond was drained. From there I'd turn north and proceed to school. The buildings that are here now were the same as then.

The house I live in now was occupied by a fellow by the name of Carp who was in the printing business. *(How old is this house?)* 1928.

(When you went to St. Mary's, do you remember any of your friends or teachers or nuns?) Oh, I can remember some of them, some with pleasure and some with dislike, as any youngster who had some teachers he didn't particularly care for. I think the youngsters today would have some trouble handling the discipline that we had then. *(Much stricter?)* Oh Lord yes! You kept your mouth shut and paid attention! No backtalk — you talked back, you paid!

(What would you like to see for McHenry?) Today McHenry needs to make up its mind if it wishes to continue its rapid growth or to stop expanding, fill in the area we have laid out and call it a day. If the city is the size it wants to be, redraw the ordinances in a very restrictive form and hold the line where we are. If the decision is for more growth, don't treat every developer like they are "Atilla the Hun", but work with them and help them instead of fighting them.

What I would really like to see, and I think McHenry is not so large and oddly enough, if there's any neighborhood where the stores could be renovated and restored to the way it used to be, is west McHenry. Because I can remember what some of those old store fronts used to look like. And it's still under there. If you pulled the trash off and exposed those old store fronts and polished them up and shined them up, you might be able to make an old-time section out the west side.

Riverside Drive, I've got to believe there are four facades on the Old Bridge Tavern. I don't know how many times that's been covered up. Barbian's Grocery Store has a brick front now. I strongly suspect that the old wood from the 1880's or 90's or whenever the buildings were built is still under there. But really on Riverside Drive that's about all that hasn't been knocked down or replaced one way or the other. Or they've torn the fronts completely off and then laid brick up or whatever.

Centertown is much the same way. Bolger's which has a facade on it could be brought back to the old time thing. But I don't know how in the world you would get the real historical restoration like in New Orleans. You might just be able to do it here because it's not so large. The sections are comparatively small. The west side, if anything, is closer to the original than anywhere.

(You recently were involved in the purchase of the old Riverside Retail outlet store, which has had a long history before that and is now the McHenry Trading Company. Describe a little, what was it like trying to fix that building up?) Nowhere near as difficult as it would seem. It was a very, very sound old building that had not been taken care of for forty years probably. It was a lot of work, but the building itself is extremely sound, as well as was, say, the wiring that was in the building. It had initially been a sewing factory, and there was a tremendous amount of electrical power and well installed. The building itself is very unusual. It was built as a power plant. It only generated electricity for a few years, but I think the fellows that went into it were far-sighted enough to realize that if they managed to get the franchise for generating power for the city of McHenry, that Commonwealth Edison would buy them out in a few years at a great profit. I strongly suspect that is what they did. They sold their franchise to Commonwealth Edison in probably 1910 and retired wealthy men more than likely.

From there, the building was a Model "T" garage. We found some assorted Model "T" parts and the old knob and tube wiring and odds and ends of that nature. There is an elevator in the building. It was built to transport the Model "T's" all the way up to the top floor, which initially was a ballroom. They assembled them up there and repaired them and then they brought them back down to the main floor which was the showroom. *(They actually assembled Model "T's" there?)* Well, the Model "T" came in a crate and had to be assembled right at the garage.

(What else do you remember?) I would say one other thing — where Southgate Apartments is now, was in days gone by, an apple orchard and the back part of it, a gentleman by the name of Winkleman raised peonies and he sold the seed commercially. Prior to that being a subdivision on Center Street, that immediate area many years ago was Wattles Park. There was a ball diamond in that area, where at one time the Chicago White Sox came out and played, and there was a racetrack there. Up until a few years ago, the last eighth pole prior to the grandstand was still there — right on the edge of the Edgebrook School yard.

(Above) Construction of an addition to Old Bridge Tavern on the east side of Riverside Drive.

(Below) The electrical generating plant building in 1904 on the northeast corner of Pearl Street and Riverside Drive is now the site of the McHenry Trade Center.

Donald Doherty

I would like to begin the story when I was seven years old. I attended Holcombville School which is located four miles south of McHenry and four miles north of Crystal Lake. I lived on a farm with my mother and father and one sister. My classmates at Holcombville School in first and second grade were Bernard, Bill and Jim Doherty. They were cousins. One of the teachers was Marie Osborne from Solon Mills. Another was Ruth Gardner, who taught at Terra Cotta School on Rte. 31.

I lived on a farm all these years. My father owned a farm on the west side of Crystal Lake Road. My grandfather owned a much larger farm on the east side of Crystal Lake Road. They worked together. I enjoyed cultivating corn with a team of horses. It was a real challenge at twelve to be left alone with a team of horses for the afternoon to cultivate the fields. I really liked the things that had to do with machinery.

(Did farmers help themselves when it came to threshing or did they gather in groups?) In those years we had a threshing crew. All the farms in between participated in that threshing crew. There would be a thresher's dinner at noon. It was a really delicious meal with beer for the men. It was a lot of work for the men but a fun time for the kids. I could drive the tractor, start the blowers and do a lot of things that had to do with the mechanics of the procedure. I always liked loading the wagons in the field. Threshing was just a real exciting time as far as I was concerned.

(What did your family do in the evenings for fun?) We played baseball with my cousins in the summer. We played ping pong at their house in the winter. On a really hot summer night we would come to McHenry for a chocolate soda at Bolger's Drug Store. My uncle, Tom, owned it. There was an ice cream fountain in the store and a popcorn stand next to it. It was a very popular thing to pop corn at home in the winter time. We would eat popcorn, read books and newspapers and do

homework. My mother was a former school teacher so I always had to hit the books in the winter. My bedtime during school was 8 p.m. as I had to milk the cows at 5:30 a.m. I still to this day get up early.

(Was your grandfather the first of the Doherty's to come to this McHenry area?) No, his father and his twin brother were the first to come. they came from Kilkenny County in Ireland. *(What brought them over here?)* They came to find a better life because there was a potato famine in Ireland. My father originally came to Irish Prairie and what is now Barreville Road. Eventually they bought the farm on Crystal Lake Road.

(You mentioned that you had dairy herds. Where did you bring your milk for processing?) Our milk was brought to McHenry and sold to Bowman Dairy Company. In those years, milk was shipped in cans. Milk cans are real antiques today. Every morning at 7:30 fifteen cans of milk would be picked up at our farm and brought to the Farmer's Mill. Today it is Farm Service. From there it would go to the Bowman Dairy Company in Chicago.

(How long did you stay on the farm?) I stayed on the farm until I graduated from McHenry High School and went to the Army. I enlisted in the Army in 1945 and served two years. When I came back, I went to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. I graduated in 1951, taught school in Glen Ellyn through June 1953. During this time I attended night pharmacy school in Chicago and got my license in pharmacy. I moved to McHenry in 1953 and have lived here ever since. I worked at Bolger's Drug Store for my uncle, Thomas P. Bolger.

(How has operating a drug store changed since you were starting out?) It is changed to a degree because now we have chain stores as competition and we used to have a soda fountain which was a big traffic draw. Ice cream was a delicacy not a food item as it is today. The fountain business changed and eventually it got too big and cumbersome for a drug store. It became incompatible in running a pharmacy.

Today you fill more prescriptions because there are more medicines and more people. Medicine has come a long way just as other fields such as dentistry have in the last 30 years. When the soda fountain was discontinued, we went into the gift and card business.

(Do you remember some of the other businesses along Green Street when you started?) Yes, George Justen Furniture Store was north of the drug store. In back on Elm Street was George Justen Funeral Home. To the south of Bolger's was Mrs. Pick's Millinery Shop, Peterson's Five and Dime Store, Huppy and Leo's, and Carey Appliance. Where St. Regis is now was a tavern called My Place. Unti's Ice Cream Factory was next to Gladstone's Department Store. The American Legion was where the McHenry Savings Bank is now. On the east side of Green Street, at the corner of Green and Elm, was the National Tea Company, then Pries Butcher Shop, Agatha Shop, Vaughn Jones Hand Dipped Candy, A&P Store, Joseph Regner Grocery Store, McHenry Bakery, Joe Miller Tavern, Vycital's Hardware Store, John Dreymiller Barber Shop, Claire's Beauty Shop was owned by Clara Noonan. We had a theater but it burned down and a new theater was built in the same place. Miss Jones and Mrs. Goodell owned the Agatha Shop and sold table cloths, towels, knick knacks, and other gift items. Vaughn Jones shared the store with hand dipped candy.

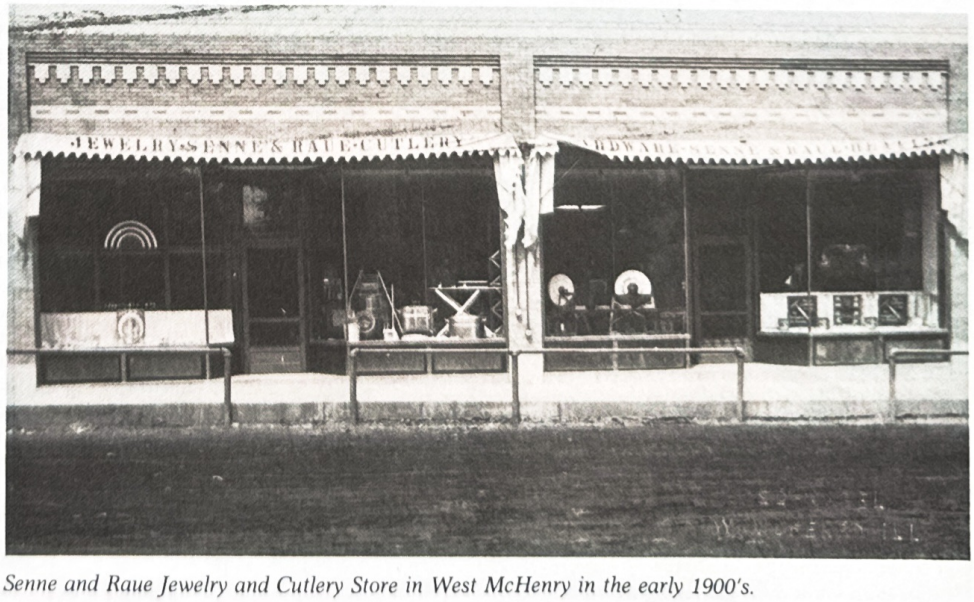
On Main Street there were three grocery stores. One was run by Peter Schaefer, one by Lewis Adams and one by Art Smith. Also on Main Street was A. E. Nye Jewelry Store, Joseph W. Freund Clothiers and McHenry State Bank and Wattles Drug Store. On Riverside Drive was McHenry Post Office, Gies' Shoe Store, H.E. Buch Plumbing. On the east side of the street was Old Bridge Tavern and Karls' Cafe. Each area of town was set up as an individual business district and in those years there was more loyalty among customers than there is now. Eventually that changed and the world just began to think bigger.

(When you dated in McHenry, where did you go?) On a date in those days you went to the show either here in McHenry or in Crystal Lake. Sometimes we went to a dance at the Riviera in Lake Geneva. In high school we went to a basketball game every Friday night. After the game we went to Ma Thompson's Barbecue. She served barbecue's, ice cream and pie. Everybody went there. It was located across the bridge east on Route 120 where there is a gas station now. Her daughter, Mildred Reese, was a waitress. Ma Thompson's blueberry pie ala mode was our favorite.

On Saturday nights we would go to the high school gym and play ping pong. Leonard McCracken, the coach, was in charge. That was the place to go. People did not go out to dinner as often as they do in 1986. Most people ate at home. That's another big change in modern living.

(You were Mayor during the 60's?) Yes, I was elected mayor in 1961 and held that office until 1972. *(How do you find it different being mayor of a city and then being on the county board?)* It's a different job completely. In the county you are dealing more with the business at hand. As mayor we were constantly promoting the city as far as industrial growth. We were working on a motel in those years and we had large subdivisions that were annexed to the city like Whispering Oaks. During those years, Lakeland Park was annexed. The job of the County Board is to promote the county. It was the Mayor's job to promote the City of McHenry. I enjoy them both. Being mayor is a 24-hour-a-day job, while the county board is not, unless you are chairman.

(As we celebrate our Sesquicentennial this year, what would you like to foresee for McHenry in the years ahead?) I hope it will grow and prosper like it has in the past. I hope that we can continue to upgrade our residential areas like we have with areas like Glacier Ridge and Woodcreek. I hope we can get more apartments. One of our needs here is for apartments. And I'm sure that we are going to grow. We must grow orderly and we must balance it with some industry which we're trying to do. As far as the traffic is concerned, I sincerely hope that we can get another road across the river, which we are working on at the County level right now and I think that will be done. As far as the city is concerned, I just hope that it can grow business-wise and residential-wise and industrial-wise and orderly in the future. There is nothing but good ahead for McHenry. I'm confident the business areas will be properly taken care of and will continue to grow and prosper. The Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the city has always been extremely cooperative with the business areas in working toward the betterment of them. I sincerely hope that McHenry will move ahead on all these fronts.



Senne and Raue Jewelry and Cutlery Store in West McHenry in the early 1900's.

Adele Froehlich

(Where were you born?) I was born in McHenry and lived here all my life. I especially remember living in the white house (kindergarten house) when I was only a few years old.

(What were your favorite radio or television programs?) I remember the old Fred Waring programs. They were so good on early television that I was convinced to get my first TV set. Amateur hours were especially popular in the early television years.

(What else do you remember from the early days?) As a grade schooler I remember very well Grandma Frisby's boarding and rooming house across the street. Grandma Bridget and her daughter, Ann, operated the house and cooked noon meals for many of the local teachers. As a youngster I was fascinated to watch as Grandma peeled huge numbers of potatoes. She was in a wheelchair and it seemed that every time I visited there she was peeling. The long table in the dining room was filled each noon with teachers from Landmark School and East Campus, which at that time housed all the high school students.

(What were some of the old time remedies you had in your family?) None in our family. My dad was a doctor and that is interesting in itself, in view of the costs of medicine today. His last office was on the site of the present McHenry State Bank. For many years I remember him charging a dollar and a half for an office call and three dollars for a house call. And, believe me, he made a lot of house calls. His day started about 9 in the morning with house calls and he spent the afternoon and evening in the office. Holidays were unbelievable. There was no hospital and only three doctors in town. He was on call seven days a week and Sundays and special holidays were many times busiest of all.

He took care of the medical needs of Villa Maria Children's Camp at the Bay, including broken bones, for $150 for a three-month period. This included at least five visits a week.

(Can you tell me about your work with the Plaindealer?) I worked there at first when the office was located on north Green Street. One outstanding memory was the time during World War II when the publisher sent the newspapers, free of charge, to every serviceman who requested it. Sometimes address changes occurred twice in a week and it seemed we spent more time keeping up with them than we did on gathering news.

The old flat bed presses and old-fashioned folders are things of the past. They caused us plenty of trouble at the time but they're happy memories now.

(What else do you remember?) The Wattles property, just down the street on John Street, had a large barn with a grassy area leading from the street to the barn entrance. John Street was so quiet when I was young that in the winter we could ride our sleds from the top of the elevation and into the streets.

This is where the circus would set up their tents each summer. Nobody trusted circus people or gypsies and this was the only time we would lock our doors.

Frank Gans

I was brought up in the Riverside Hotel. I went to Landmark School in McHenry. After graduation I went to work for the Pearl Fishery down on River Road. They sent me to Florida and I worked there for two years. They grew pearls. It was the Bostic Pearl Fishery. The same as they do in Japan.

Then beginning in High School, I had an orchestra and I played dance proms and colleges all around McHenry and I played at different places up in Wisconsin. I played for 18 years. *(Who were some of the members of your band?)* Barbara Horick, who lives up on Richmond Rd.; Norman Falk from Woodstock; Roy Kent, the real estate man; and Fred Wantz, who played the trumpet. I played violin and drums.

(What brought your parents to McHenry?) My Dad was an auctioneer in McHenry. F.O. Gans. He auctioned off old farms and everything. He auctioned the old Schnoor House and all of the equipment in there. That was Count Oscar von Oberstadt's on Main and Waukegan — the count's house. From there he came over to Riverside Hotel and we opened that up. We owned that for 18 years, then the war came up, and when that started all of the people couldn't come out here for chicken and steak dinners, so we had to close it up because we didn't have enough people. Everything went dead down here during the war.

(What do you remember about the Riverside Hotel? Who were some of the people who stayed there?) A lot of salespeople and all of that. *(What drew people out to McHenry?)* Strictly the summer resorts. It was quiet in the winter, but we still had transit trade.

(Did you like living in the hotel, was it exciting?) Yes, until the war came around. Then nobody was around anymore. My dad went to work for those people who were selling boots and shoes to the Army and he had the bankers here. They went to New York. My mother and I, and I think my sister, lived alone and we had two janitors living with us. It was quite a scary place. We didn't have many people in the hotel. Then when the war came on, the hotel went absolutely dead. Everything was dead.

(Can you describe the hotel?) It had 32 bedrooms and it had a big dance hall in the back, up on the top floor. But then our dining room was a dance hall too. It was a big dining room. Sometimes in the good years, we would have 300 people for chicken dinners and steak dinners. Before the war, it cost $12.50 a week for room and board.

(Do you remember taking a trip up to the lotus beds?) I drove boats up there all of the time. For three summers. I worked for the Hunter Boat Factory. They had eighteen boats going up to the lotus beds and I drove the Gladola, I was captain of the Gladola. We'd sing and dance. We'd get up there to the lotus beds and we'd sell flowers for 30¢ or 40¢ a bushel. Then we had the big flood and they all died out. I think the flood was about 1940. That was the end of it. The flood came just as they were blooming and when it came it went up to about three or four feet and pulled all of the roots right out. A few came back. There are hardly any right now. That is the lotus flower, the same as they have in Egypt, exactly the same.

(So, McHenry was pretty much a summer place.) Yes, strictly summer. All of the people in our hotel in the summertime, they were all fishermen. Schmalz Miller was telling me how he ran the Buck's place, that hotel down there, and he was telling me that his grandmother told him that there was a little cabin down there where Buck's place is. That's the hotel down there, the Old Bridge. She lived in that old cabin and at that time there was no bridge here and it was real shallow water and she said that she could see the Indians coming down at that time. But, they crossed the river here with their cows. *(Where the Pearl Street Bridge is now, was low enough to cross it?)* Yes. Well, the water was low then. It was all bullrushes. I have a picture showing Buck's hotel down there. And there isn't a house on that shore there. Now it's nothing but houses.

(What happened to the Hunter Boat Company, didn't that burn?) Yes, some of it did. We had forty men working over there and we had boat shows in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Detroit, a lot of the boats were from Detroit and Chicago. *(Boats that were build right here?)* By Hunter Boat Company. They had all kinds, family boats, beautiful cruisers. Their heyday was just before the second world war. Then Hunter started building boats for the United States Navy. *(Was there actually a Mr. Hunter?)* Sure. Everett Hunter, Sr. At first when I started working I was his chauffeur. He died and then Edward Hunter, Jr. came and I was his secretary. I set up the displays and everything in the summertime. I worked over at Hunters for 14 years. The Hunters lived right across the river. They are all dead now. They were from England and all of the boats were named with "Glad" — Gladine, Gladola, Gladis. That was Mr. Hunter's niece in England.

(Where were some of the places your band played?) The Poly-Prim opened up and Mrs. Sol had the loud speaker and all of these machines. It was all loudspeakers. *(That was on the east side of the river?)* Yes, the east side. I went in there with a nine-piece orchestra and it was unheard of at the time, but dancing was the big thing. We had the Fox Dance Hall over here, where they had twelve hundred people there at night. Over at Sol's we had a floor show and we'd change the floor show twice a week. I got most of my floor shows from Waukegan. We played at the Poly-Prim for a long time. But, we closed it up one night and it burnt down. That was after the second World War.

(Do you remember anything about the building that they now call the McHenry Trading Center on the corner of Pearl and Riverside?) It was an old garage. Once there was a dance floor on the top floor and a roller skating rink. I played up there. My first two or three dances. I played for the roller skating rink. *(The roller skating rink was on the top floor?)* Yes. After that, the dress place came in there. The Riverside Outlet.

(What happened that changed all of the dances?) Well, one time the crop got too big and the unions came in, the musicians union. They had given me a little trouble before. But then they came in and told me I couldn't be the master of ceremony, I had to hire a master of ceremony. I couldn't have a singer like I had, I had to hire a girl singer. I had to join the union in Kenosha, but I belonged to the Elgin locals. I had to pay double fees. Then if we played a lot of real popular music we had to pay Jimmy about seven dollars a night to play that real popular music. They just made it so it was unbelievable what they had done to us. So, I went to the members and said that you have got to take over here. This isn't going to work.

(You live right here on the north side of the Riverside Beach. Can you remember when that was the Weber property?) Yes, all vacant land with a boat house. There was an old dance hall right next door. *(How long have you lived here?)* Since 1941. *(Did they always have a beach here?)* Yes, we always had a beach. Now they took the beach away and it is a park. They still swim here a lot but they're not supposed to. They want them all to go over to the swimming pool.

Barbara Freund Gilpin

I can trace my ancestry back to 1842. I was born in the house on Pearl Street directly across from Pearl Street Park. My dad is Herbert H. Freund, my grandfather was Stephen H. Freund, my great grandfather was Mathias S. Freund, my great-great grandfather was Stephen Freund and my great-great-great grandmother was Anna Marie Freund who came from Englen, Germany, when the Fox Valley first opened to white settlers. Mrs. Anna Freund sent her two older sons over from Germany to avoid service in Germany's mighty war machine in 1842-44.

Already other German people in the upper valley had formed a settlement which became known as the German Prairie near Johnsburg. In 1850, another of Mrs. Freund's sons, Stephen, decided to join his brothers in America. Mrs. Freund, a widow by now, and two more of her sons eligible for the German army, decided to join Stephen and come to

America. She was 62 years old at the time. She packed her belongings and joined Stephen in the long journey to the new land. The family was apparently moderately well-to-do since Stephen selected a home site and purchased a farm shortly after their arrival on the German Prairie. Great-great-great Grandmother Freund died in 1872 at the age of 85 years old.

Her son Stephen had a son Mathias who married Anna Wagner. She too had migrated from Germany and from the same locality near Englen or Cologne from which the original Freunds had come. Mathias and Anna, farming on the German Prairie, brought into the world nine children, one of whom was my Grandfather, Stephen H. Freund. His brothers were Peter, Joseph, Frank and John, and his sisters were Mary, Kate, Gertrude and Emma. His brothers were instrumental in establishing retail stores, taverns and dance halls throughout McHenry in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

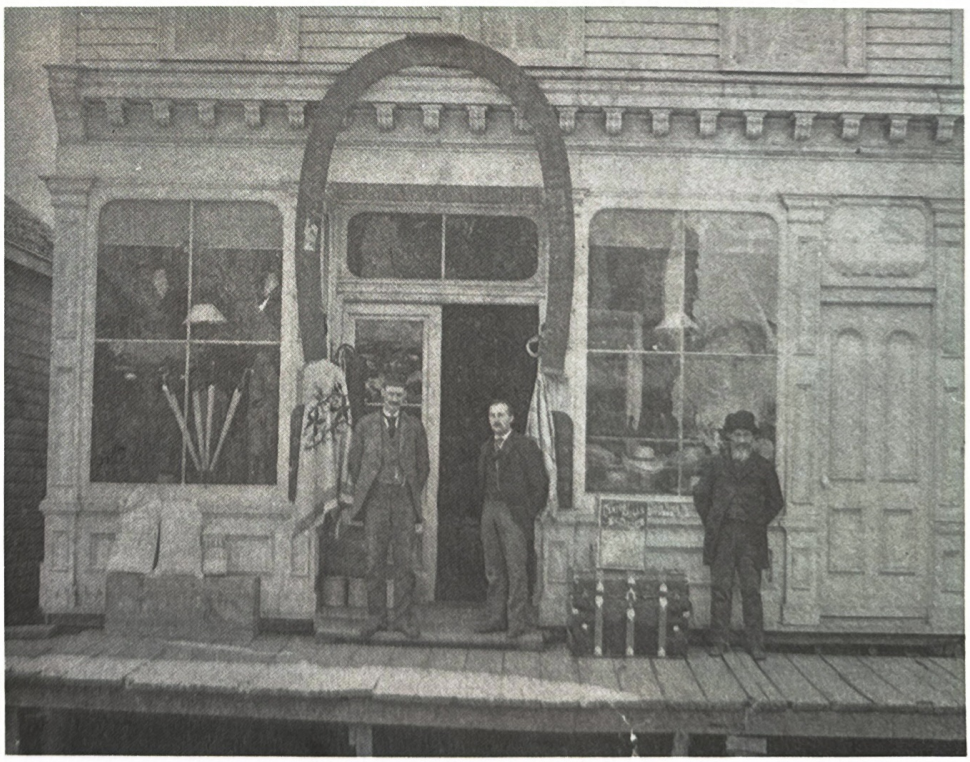
In 1888, Grandpa Stephen married Catherine Klapperich. They had seven children; Mary (Mrs. H.E.) Buch, Anton P. Freund, Celia (Mrs. Frank) Blake, Carl J. Freund, Herbert H. Freund, Helen (Mrs. Bernard) Smith and Bertilla Freund. Grandpa Stephen served on the high school Board of Education for many years. He also served as McHenry Township Supervisor for over 30 years.

My Dad, Herbert H. Freund, married Hildegard Weber in Johnsburg on June 9, 1927. They had four children; Barbara (Mrs. George) Gilpin, Eugene P., Paul M. and Joan A. Freund. My mother died in 1933 at the age of 29. She left four children under 4½ years of age. My dad undertook the momentous job of keeping the family together during the Depression years. His sister, my aunt Bertilla, helped raise us for twelve years.

We were a very close knit family since my grandparents and five of their children all lived in the same block across from Pearl Street Park. As a result, 14 cousins grew up in the same back yard, went to school together, played together and fought with and for each other! We had a great childhood because we had Pearl Street Park across the street as a playground, could go fishing off the Pearl Street Bridge every day, could swim at the beach on the Fox River which was located at Washington Street and Riverside Drive, were only one block away from Barbian's Grocery Store and Tucker's Sweet Shop at the corner of Pearl and Riverside Drive which is now the Riverside Chocolate Factory.

We didn't do much traveling in those days. One of our trips on the weekends was to drive to my Grandma Weber's house north of Johnsburg and play on the farm. Another treat was when my Dad would take all my cousins on the back of his old Model T truck and we'd drive over to the Wilbur (Alexander) Lumber Company on Main Street. The train tracks ran right through the lumber building so that carloads of lumber could be unloaded right into the proper bins in the building. It was like driving through a giant tunnel to us kids and

John Miller's Store on the south side of Main Street in West McHenry. Standing in the doorway are John Miller and Joseph Freund.



we really got a big thrill out of it. We were easy to entertain in those days. Still are today!

My dad's brothers and sisters all lived within one mile of each other, which meant there were 29 first cousins who could get together in a matter of minutes to play football, baseball, tennis, go roller skating, go fishing or have a party.

There were no organized park playground programs in those days, but for a period of time in the early 1940's, Leonard McCracken (Mac) who was the football coach and Athletic Director at the high school, was hired to be Director of a summer park program in Pearl Street Park. There was volleyball, baseball, loop tennis, tether ball, horseshoes, etc.

Grandpa Stephen started the construction business of S. H. Freund & Son in the early 1900's. That business was handed over to my dad who now has turned it over to my brothers, Eugene and Paul Freund, and my brother-in-law, Robert P. Freund. The fourth generation of contractors is now being incorporated into the business since my brother Eugene's sons, Peter and Scott, and my brother Paul's sons, Steven and Mark, are now working for the company.

I attended St. Mary's Parochial School and McHenry Community High School. I started singing on St. Mary's Choir when I was ten years old and I'm still there standing in that same Alto spot. Sr. Andreella was an excellent music teacher who came to St. Mary's when I was ten years old and proceeded to try and get me to play a musical instrument. I loved the piano but there was no money for such a luxury in those days so I took the Bass Drum and played all through grade school. When I got to high school, they had plenty of drummers so my musical career stopped dead! I sang in all the choral groups in high school and went to several music contests.

Ironically, Adele Froehlich was the vocal music teacher when I was in high school and that's where I got to know her. She is also an avid tennis player, as I am, so we got to know each other very well. In 1969, our love for tennis got us together because while we were playing tennis, she asked if I would like to work as a reporter on the McHenry Plaindealer. She was editor at the time.

My children were all in school so I took the part-time job and worked for the Plaindealer for seven years as a reporter. My news beat was the Sheriff's Department, the County Courthouse, the McHenry Police Department, and the City Council Meetings. During my years at the newspaper, the Mark Smith murder cases occurred along with several other murder stories. They always kidded me at the Plaindealer that they didn't know if it was a crime the way I reported or if I was a Crime Reporter. I prefer the latter!

I covered the City Council meetings for seven years and never missed a meeting. It was because of my attendance at these Council meetings that I got my job as City Clerk. When the former City Clerk resigned before her term was up, Joseph Stanek who was mayor at the time, asked if I would consider an appointment to that job. Since I had gained a lot of knowledge during the years I was covering the Council meetings, I agreed to accept the appointment to fill the unexpired term. I ran for election in April 1977 and have been City Clerk ever since.

Adele and I worked together for seven years and were a great newspaper team. Now we're working together again as Co-Chairmen of the City of McHenry's Sesquicentennial Commission. It's funny how our paths have kept crossing over the years.

Getting back to my high school days, my teachers were Maurie Taylor, Lillian and Clarence Anglese, Lillian Bolger, Helen Stevens, May Justen, Jennie Mae Richardson and Marguerite Winkel. C.H. Duker was the Superintendent of Schools. In my Senior year, he asked me to work for him in the office. When I graduated, Mr. Duker hired me as the first secretary to work for him and the Boards of Education for Districts 15 and 156. At that time, one Superintendent handled both districts. I graduated from high school in 1947 and worked there until my marriage in 1950. I went back and worked several times after the birth of two of my children.

During my high school days, a big treat was going to roller skating rinks in surrounding towns. We skated in rinks at Waukegan, Woodstock, McHenry, Elkhorn, etc. Sometimes big name bands would come to these rinks and they would be turned into dance floors for these special occasions. I met my husband George at the Just For Fun Roller Rink in McHenry. He caught my eye because he was one of those flashy skaters with lights under his wheels who could do all kinds of fancy tricks on roller skates. After the rink closed at night, everyone would go to eat at Ma Thompson's which is where the Kean Gas Station is now on the east side of the bridge at River Road. We also went to Al's Whitehouse which was located on the northeast corner of Chapel Hill and Route 120.

In high school, our football games were played on the east side of the high school which is now the parking lot. Three tennis courts were located between the school building and the north side of John Street where the south wing addition is now located. Prom and Homecoming dances were held in what is now the girls' gymnasium. We'd spend days decorating for these dances. There was always a lot of school spirit then because we were a small school and there wasn't much social life to participate in. With gas rationing during the war and not a lot of cars, we had to make the most of what we had.

I can remember the celebration that took place on V-J Day. When the news came over the radio that Japan had surrendered, everyone got into their cars and formed a parade that traveled down every street in town. People sat on the hoods of their cars and stood on the running boards waving the American Flag. Business places closed so everyone could join in the celebration. It went on for days. It was something you could never forget.

After George and I were married in 1950, we lived for three years on a farm in Greenwood. We moved back to McHenry and have lived on Maple Avenue in the same house ever since. We have four children; Mary Jo (Mrs. Brett) Decker, George Jr. (Skip), Gary, and Gina.

Since I've lived in McHenry all my life, I have a saying I always use, "I was born two blocks east of St. Mary's Church. I now live two blocks west of St. Mary's Church. I'll probably die in the hospital two blocks south of St. Mary's Church and get buried in the cemetery two blocks north of St. Mary's Church." Well, McHenry Hospital has now moved one mile south of St. Mary's Church and has ruined my whole routine!

McHenry has always been very special. It is growing at a fast pace now but one thing that has always been unique to McHenry is the small town feeling we have about caring for our neighbors and working together to get a job done. No matter how big McHenry gets, that small hometown feeling is something we should all try to promote and maintain.

Leading the Homecoming Parade in 1946 are Joan May Buss, Barb Freund Gilpin, Shirley Weber Sutton, and Doris Smith Freund.

Donald Givens

My grandparents came from the northern part of Ireland and they landed in Boston. They came up to the Great Lakes, up to Waukegan, then here from Waukegan. They had relatives over here at that time. Some settled here and some settled in Woodstock. Then Richard and Rosanne Givens settled south of McHenry where the Moraine State Park is now situated. They built a house there made of logs.

(Where was your grandparent's farm?) It ran back to Lake Defiance and both of the farms were right next door to each other. My dad's farm was right at the entrance where you go into the park. The house was on one side and the barns were on the other side. Then my other grandparents, my mother's folks, John and Virginia Frisby, came over in a boat also and they ended up in the Great Lakes area too, Waukegan. On the way over, it took six weeks. They had terrible storms and they said one colored person died on the trip. They had to bury him at sea.

They were farming down on South River Road, and it was all wood. They were cleaning up all of the land and cutting down the timber and the trees so that they could plow it. Until they got going good there, they used to rent land from some of their neighbors across the river. They used to cross the river by what they call now Emerald Park. Bull Valley Road goes into Emerald Park. The park is on the east side and then it goes right up to across from the new hospital. *(And that was the low end of it?)* Yes. There was no dam. In high water they said that the water used to come right up to the box of the wagons. But they used to go over there and plant. It was a slow way of farming but they didn't have any tools.

(Did they use the river much for fishing at all?) Just for their own use. And there were no ways across the river in McHenry. You could cross in Johnsburg and in Cary, but it was quite a long way between. *(Being over on the East side over there, did they do their shopping in McHenry?)* Oh yes. There wasn't much to buy, it was just little stores. Most everybody raised what they had. That's what they had to get along by. They would have a few hogs and a couple of cows. All of the farmers and neighbors, they would butcher them and it would go around to all of the neighbors. And then the neighbors would do the same thing. The women always had a lot of chickens and ducks and geese and they would sell the eggs.

Then toward Christmas time they would have a pickin' feast. All of the neighbors would get together and they would have one little guy (they used to call Jackie Right) and he used to be the handy man all over. He would live with one for awhile, then go to another and they took care of him. And so he would be always the one who would get the water warm, build a big fire underneath it. They had only wood to burn then. That was under a big kettle and then they would douse the chickens in the kettle and then they'd throw them out and the women would pick them. Then they would sell them, wherever they could, up-town, or barter or something.

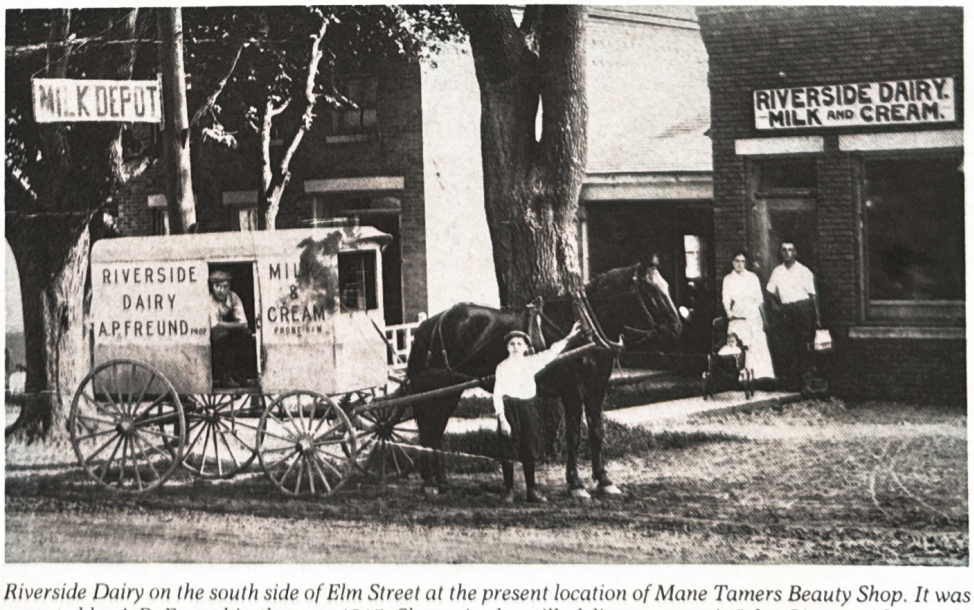
(Your grandparents got their lumber for building their house from Waukegan. Was that the only place they could get it milled?) Yes. Because they had no lumber sheds here at that time. So they hauled it from Waukegan and it took the best of three days, and you know the roads, we used to call them plank roads. They were all mud and when it rained a lot, there would be places that you couldn't get through. Then they'd have to stop and get branches from trees and put them down in there and see if they could grab. Or if there was a haystack nearby, they'd put it on top of the branches and that's the way we got along on plank roads like that. *(Did the plank roads have wood down that you drove across or was it just an area that they covered?)* No. They put poles across but it was just about 15 or 20 feet wide. Of course the bad places were just in certain spots. Sometimes just up here by Mineral Springs was a bad place. I remember when we had funerals we had to go and pick where the bad places were so they they could get through with the hearse. Sometimes in the winter time when it would snow, and this was later on too, when we used to have funerals they couldn't take the hearse through the snow drifts, so they would bring the body through on a bobsled.

(What do you remember about growing up?) When I was about 12 years old I used to work for the milk route with Tony Freund, for the Riverside Dairy. That's on Elm Street now. *(That building is still standing, isn't it?)* Yes, that's where the chiropractor is now. The building next door, Jepsen is there now, there used to be a two-story building there and it was a bake shop. German people by the name of Dietz used to run it. He and his wife and his son and daughter. When I was working for Tony at the milk route we were right next door and when we got through we used to go by Dietz and paint the rolls and stuff with icing. Then I used to do a little shopping for them to deliver. They had a horse and buggy, and we used to sell up in Pistakee Bay and up around in there. So, during my time off in the afternoon, I used to do that for them. I'd be busy all of the time. In the real hot weather when we were running the milk route, we had horse and wagons at that time, and Tony would go on one side of the street and I'd go on the other. At one time, it was the only dairy in town and we had to get out at 3:30 in the morning because they didn't have any preservatives to put in the milk and if the sun hit it, it would be sour.

(Did you see many boats on the river at that time?) Oh, no. Those came in gradually. Hunter built a couple of passenger boats and he'd run them. He used to go to the Lotus beds up there in Wilmot, Wis. and they used to pay a dollar for the trip. They used to go up to Blarney Island. There was Terrible Tommy O'Connor in Chicago, notorius guy, he did a lot of damage all around. And, they couldn't catch him. He used to be up there every once in awhile. His brother was head of Blarney's Island.

(When you were growing up over there on the Riverside Drive area, who were some of your friends and what are some of the things you used to do as a kid?) There were the Reeds. They lived right in back of us. They lived just in back of Windhill, the house right in back of there. The creek was back there. We used to go fishing and spearing carp and we'd take a dip and that. The bricks that are in the Riverside Hotel — the clay was dug out of a hole in back of Reeds' house and it was real deep and the fish were wonderful.

(The spot where the Riverside Hotel is, that was all park? Did that extend all of the way down in front of all those building down there?) Yes. There were boats and boat landings all of the way up there. All the way up to the bridge. Then there



Riverside Dairy on the south side of Elm Street at the present location of Mane Tamers Beauty Shop. It was operated by A.P. Freund in the year 1915. Shown in the milk delivery wagon is John Givens with Donald Givens holding Molly the Horse. Standing in the doorway are Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Freund with their daughter Leone Freund Tonyan in the baby buggy.

was the brick building across the west end of Pearl Street bridge, where the McHenry Trading Post is now, that was our first power plant in McHenry. They had a power plant down in the basement of that building. It was powered with gasoline, generator. They powered it but that didn't last long because then they came in with gas to McHenry. Then we had gas lights down by the river. We only had two in the house. They ran the pipes right over and they put a bulb on that.

(Do you remember when you got a telephone?) Oh, Yes. There was only one telephone station in McHenry County. Then the one operator. It was right down on the corner of Elm and Green where they have the jewelry store, and it runs back to the Post Office back there. The original building was a cigar factory, Barbian's Cigars, and they had a big business. They had as many as fifteen cigar makers working there.

Years ago, for any disease or anything, they would quarantine and Doc Wells used to like a shot once in a while and he always had a cigar in his mouth. Even when he was going to see a patient he had that cigar in his mouth and everybody was his friend. Anyway, the Doc says we can put the sign on the house over there but we won't close your cigar factory. Heck no. No decent German could do that. *(Sounds like this Doctor Wells was a well liked man.)* Oh yeah. Everybody did. He had to go all the way up to Fox Lake. He had all of the way up there. See, there were only two doctors at the time. There was the Fegers. The Feger's had a place where Doc Nye had. He was one of the starters of the West McHenry State Bank. Just think at that time, it was 1906 that they started that and I was only five years old. My dad went into the bank and they gave him a nickel, or what looked like a nickel, it was some kind of steel, but it was a bank. It had a place for nickels, quarters, dimes and it was safe. My first paying job as a child was mowing lawns — ten cents for mowing the whole lawn.

(Do you remember any of the things that happened throughout the years, big snow storms or fires, or bank robberies?) Three fingered Jack White robbed the West McHenry State Bank one time. Down at the golf course they had a place down there. They were staying down there all summer. They played golf with all of the people. They didn't know who he was until he robbed the bank. There was a bad wreck in McHenry. A train came down. It is the Kenosha line now but it used to be the Wisconsin Division that went up through Woodstock. This train came down and ran off and hit the old station. The old station was down just where the propane tanks are down a little further and back a little bit, just at the bend, just about where the lumber company is.

(Where was Augustburg? Was it it's own little community or what?) It's right up here on the north end of Washington Street. One gentleman lived up there, August Wisnowski, and we all called him Augustburg. There was a dead end street that went all of the way back. Now it's all built up over there, but then it was a dead end street. There were four or five people who lived back there. Darwin Granger lived down at the end, then there was Frank Ward, Wallace Glanowski, Fred Karls, Pete Frett, then Bill Tonyan. That was Augustburg.

I could tell you for two weeks about some of the old characters. They were business people too. *(Some of the older people that you were talking about that were kind of outstanding in your mind?)* Some of the Indians, they owned the property where Bimbo's is on Riverside Drive and the place next door, they had that, and they ran a hardware store. They had a big grocery store, years ago, where Bimbo's is. They used to have a dance hall up there and a meeting place. The Masons used to have a hall there, many, many years ago. Then across the street was Tony Englen and he ran a tavern. He had an ice house right out in the back and they used to fill that up with ice so he would have that in the summer. Right next to him was a long narrow building. It was probably 20 feet wide and runs back about 60 feet. And it was a barber shop and he owned that and ran that. Barbian Brothers place, that was Tony's, and he owned all of that property from there up to the corner. And it was a great big potato field. *(On Riverside Drive, that was a potato field?)* Oh yeh. They used to put potatoes in there and on this side where Betty Nielsen had her dress shop, that used to be a beer garden. Right where that building is, next to Tony's Tavern.

Jack Walsh, Earl's dad, was a copper here at that time on the west side of town and sometimes he had all of it. Matt Niesen had the east side. They had two policemen here. Jack was a constable. He could arrest anybody, anywhere. Matt used to hang out with him all of the time and Jack never paid any attention to him. He had a revolver too. But, the only time they ever used to shoot it was at New Years. At one o'clock he would be out there shooting that gun. But Matt was such a nice guy. There was no danger of hurting anybody.

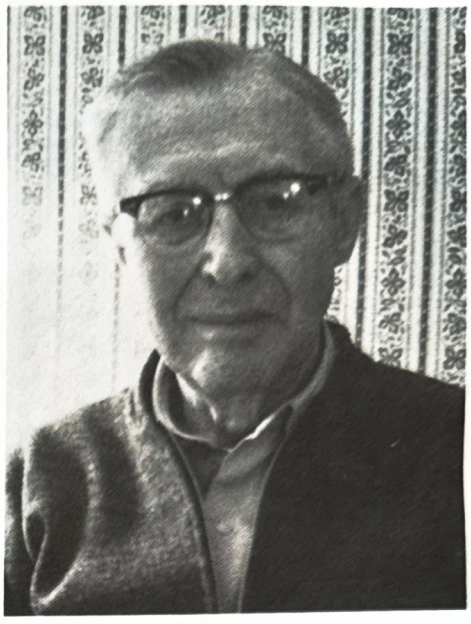
(Did you ever have the chance to go and live any other place than McHenry?) Oh, Yes. I had offers to go out west in the Dakotas, to get property and land out there. There was a land agent in town who had all of that property to dispose of. Quite a lot of people went out there. But, it is just as well that I didn't go, because none of them made out.

Alex Justen

The Justen family left Germany in 1854. Nicholas Justen and Anna Marie Schaefer were man and wife and they had six children. Anna Marie had two brothers over here already and Gumpert was going to take half of their livestock away from them over there. The Gumperts were professional farmers. So her brothers wrote and said sell out, and come over here and start in America. They had a good spot over here in America.

After they were here a year they saved enough money to get the two girls over here. They came and they all settled over here on Riverside Drive, north of McHenry, near where the Ted Schaefer home is on Scott Avenue. In fact that was the original homestead. That is shown on the 1872 plat map of McHenry County.

Then after Nick and Anna Marie Justen were here, two more boys were born. They are the founders of the Justen Funeral Homes in 1882, that was over 100 years ago. The two boys that were born in America started out in the undertaking business and the furniture business. They called themselves Justen Brothers. That was over there where the high school administrative offices are now on Main



Street in West McHenry. After they were in business a few years, Jake went over and started to work for Bolger's Drug Store on the corner of Green and Elm. In the meantime, the two parents operated it and when they retired, George R. Justen took over the two businesses. Now Bob took over after his dad passed away. And Dan took over after Peter Justen passed away. Dan still runs Peter M. Justen and Bob Justen is running his under his dad's name, George R. Justen. Mark is the fourth generation there.

It was my great grandparents who settled here. There was a creamery in Johnsburg. That's where the milk originally went before the Borden's Factory was built. They made cheese right in Johnsburg. It was located in the cement block building across from where Huemann's Well drilling is located now.

(What relation was the Justen Hotel [The old Riverside Hotel] to you?) He was a cousin of my dad. He owned it during the roaring twenties. There was a dance hall and a roller skating rink upstairs. That used to be the gathering place for all of the social events up there. Then they also had rooms. Years ago, we didn't have cars like they do now. People from Chicago would come out in the heat on the train. Where Overton's Cadillac garage is now, they had a surrey business, a team of horses and a driver, who would meet all of these trains. He would bring them down to the hotel there. Those that didn't want to stay at the hotel used to go to Pistakee Bay, the Oak Park Hotel up there. The surrey would take them. Then of course the people would take boat trips from up there. The Lotus Beds used to operate the boats in those days.

(What was it like growing up on the farm?) Oh we got up at 5 o'clock in the morning to milk the cows and work the fields because there were horse drawn vehicles in those days. We had quite a way to go, since we were way out there on John Street. Dukers' house was located right across from East Campus High School, right on the corner of Green and John. Years ago this was Wattles Woods between Grove Avenue and Oak Street, and there used to be a harness horses race track here. They used to go around the trees of Wattles Woods. Vera Kane's house sits on the old homeplate and Arnie Adams' house sits on the old pitcher's mound, of our old baseball field.

(Were there a lot of local people who raced in the harness races?) There were a lot of local people, mostly farm kids. And there really wasn't much betting on those races. On the curve from Grove to Oak Street, the curve is still there, that is where the grandstand was located. Of course the horse business went out then and automobiles came in.

During the depression, when nobody was working, some of the kids started boxing. They used to award $5 to the winner of each boxing match. They used to hold these boxing fights over the bridge where the Zephyr Gas is.

(What do you remember about the Depression?) I remember the depression very well. There was just nobody working in those days. Even Tonyan Construction Co. shut down, and they used to have as many as 175 and 180 employees working there. We just sat around and did nothing.

In the winter of 1936, we had a snowstorm and it was a dandy. The trains couldn't get in and people couldn't get any place and the farmers couldn't get to town to haul their milk. What saved us was the brewery we had in town so that we could get something to drink, and we had a flour mill (where Jim Althoff's building is, recently the office of Taylor Made Golf Company). So, we had beer to drink, and wheat to make bread and we were all set.

Boone Creek used to be about 60 acres of water. That's where they used to make ice. The Owens built that dam on the Boone Creek to get water power for their saw mills. That was in the last century.

(You mentioned going to school at St. Mary's.) There were four rooms in the school. There were two grades in each room. There weren't more than 30 kids in each classroom. Most of the kids came from the farms and not that many of them actually came from in town. We all caught a ride to school on the milk wagon and then of course we had to walk home.

In 1918 in St. Mary's Church, I had one of my friends and he didn't have much religion in him, because he said when he died and they took him into St. Mary's Church, the Church would probably burn down. Sure as God made green apples, while the services were going on for his funeral, smoke started coming out of the roof of St. Mary's Church. Us kids were all going to school and it was the noon hour. So we were outside watching the firemen, but the fire gutted the entire church. There was a fire department at that time, and it consisted of only one fire truck. The church was rebuilt. It was built by Stephen H. Freund and his boys.

I can remember the fire at the Hunter Boat Company too. I was on the mail route on Green Street. It was around 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning. It was located where Hansen's Marine is located now. Everett Hunter used to build boats there. They were boats that were big enough to go out on Lake Michigan.

(Let's talk about the golf course for a bit.) Carl Stringer was the big promoter of the golf course and he just built a shelter, two washrooms, and then a telephone booth in between. Otherwise, there were no other facilities. His son, Dick, who was about my age, in the summertime would put up a kind of tent and they would sell pop and things from there. At that time soft drinks were just coming in. When prohibition came in 1918, they began experimenting with soft drinks, like orange crush, etc.

(Did a lot of people work in the brewery in town at all?) The brewery closed down after prohibition came in 1918. I just don't know how many worked in there, that was really before my time. They used to make a malt in there, so they kept on making the beer and took the alcohol out of it. They sold it to individual people. Then you would take the malt home and make your own beer (you bought it in 5-gallon pails). We would put our own yeast and sugar in to the malt and let it ferment and make our own beer.

(Did they have any prohibition problems around town?) At one time we just called it a speakeasy in the summer resort. You could go there and have a real good time, and you could get beer at any one of them. At one time we had 72 speakeasys in town. Al Capone ran them all. Stillhill Road in McHenry Shores was where the still was located. I can remember when the trucks would bring out the sugar to put it into the still, and after they hauled out the sugar, they would roll out with those 5-gallon cans to take it to Chicago. That was night business.

Al Capone was a shrewd operator. He operated the speakeasys where the beer was delivered to and the post office collected the money for the delivery of the illegal beer. People used to make money orders out because then there was no cash handled that way. When the government finally found out that our post office was collecting money for Al Capone the postmaster was fired. The post office at that time was located in the back end of the China Light building.

Federal Income Tax came into being in 1914. And it used to be that anybody who paid their income tax had their name put on the wall there. You could see who made money and who didn't make money in town because of the posting of this notice.

(Can you remember anything about the 1940's?) I remember the Civilian Conservation Corps during the prohibition at Wilmot State Park (it was a farm at that time). All of these boys who were not working were recruited to work for the C.C.C. They were paid one dollar a day and got their room and board, but those boys built those state parks up there. Skidmore came out from Chicago and bought up all of these farms in Johnsburg. He paid $100 per acre for this land. He had plenty of money. He hired anybody who wanted to work, and would pay them 25 cents an hour so they would work all day for $2.00, and we made $12.00 a week. They all worked to level the land, take down all of the fences, all of the buildings, etc. Then we would rake the land.

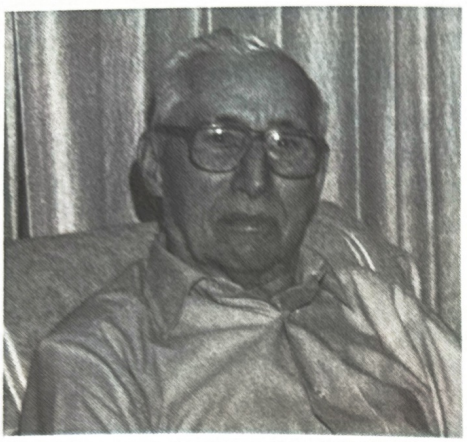
Leonard McCracken

(When did you come to McHenry?) We came to McHenry in the Fall of 1928. We came here because I had been teaching at a real small school in Findlay, Ill. and I wanted to get into a little larger school. I saw an ad in the local paper where they were looking for a coach at McHenry Community High School, so I applied to Mr. Duker and set up an appointment. I brought my wife and our first child, a little boy who was about one year old at the time. We all drove up there and stayed overnight with the Dukers and met with some of the Board members. I signed a contract while I was here, I believe.

(Once you came to McHenry, can you remember some of the other teachers who were here when you came?) Well, we were talking about that today. Miss Stevens came the same year I did. Mr. Anglese came the same year I did. In fact, I think the whole staff was almost new the year I came. Miss Minnick came the same year. Beatrice Lane was a commercial teacher. Mrs. Rulien was the school nurse. And Edmond Willis was my assistant coach.

(Will you describe for us Mr. Duker?) He was very stern. He walked around the halls on occasion rattling his keys. Every kid in the school could remember his key jangling. Maybe he did it on purpose so we would know that he was coming. I don't know. He demanded a lot from his faculty, but he was very fair. I thought he was a real fine superintendent. Of course, he was the first superintendent in the East School building when it was built.

The 1926 Peter Pirsch Fire Truck was presented to the City by the Fire Protection District for use in the park playground at Pearl Street Park in November, 1964.



(What kind of athletics were there in the High School for students at that time — the late 1920's and early 1930's?) The only sports we had when I came here were football, basketball, and that was it.

(Can you remember what kind of teams McHenry had?) Well, as far as school size we were about the fifth largest high school in McHenry County: Harvard, Marengo, Woodstock and Crystal Lake at the time I came here were all larger schools. We were happy; we held our own in terms of the county schools, but nothing outstanding. Because we were down as far as enrollment, we were right in the middle of the schools. *(Who was the biggest rival at that time?)* Woodstock and Crystal Lake — And they still are.

(Do you remember any memorable games?) I'm not too sure who we were playing, but I have a feeling it was Marengo, and it was basketball. It became a very, very rough game and we had two officials from ILLAC. The crowd felt the officials were just doing a terrible job and were actually threatening them. We had to get a policeman or two to come down to the gym to make sure that they could get out of the gym and out of the town safely.

(Can you describe what it was like when the Depression hit? Did they ever not pay you, for example?) We got vouchers that were readily acceptable at the banks for cash. We were given these vouchers in place of cash. Nobody had money, everybody had to live on sugar rationing and everything else was rationed at the time of World War II.

(What kind of things did you involve yourself with in the community?) Well, we have always been church attendants, so I was superintendent of the Sunday School for several years. My wife taught Sunday School classes. I was very active in a men's club. It was just an athletic club in which men were organized as a group. In the summertime we would play softball, and in the winter, volleyball. *(Do you remember any of the other members of that club?)* Frank Meyer, for one. Gosh, I don't know. Practically all the men in the community were members because it was a fun organization. Lester Adams, Smith Brothers, Pete Schaefer.

(Do you recall any of the outstanding athletes you worked with in the school?) Well, the first year I was here, I would say the most outstanding athlete was Eddie Frett. He was just a natural athlete. Another one who was a sophomore when I came here was Harold Patzke. Those were two outstanding athletes in all sports: football, basketball. We even sent them to the County track meet although we did not have a full track team at the time. A little later on Willard McCulla was an outstanding athlete, but that was quite a few years down the line. Each year we would have a few outstanding athletes, but I never felt it was fair to say one boy was the greatest because they played in different years and on different teams.

(When was the new field by the golf course built?) That must have been about 1945. We were one of the first schools around here to have a lighted field in order to play night ball. Our school shop department made the lights. They were very crude, but they were made out of rough metal, crudely shaped with big reflectors, each being made so that they could hold two large bulbs. At the time that was something really important: to be able to have the first night football game. It would be something like playing in moonlight, now, compared to today's lighted fields. *(What was the purpose of having night football?)* We thought we could get larger crowds. And we did. Otherwise, we played on a Friday afternoon or a Saturday afternoon, and the crowds were small. There were more parents attending with the evening games.

(How long were you with the McHenry School systems?) I came here in 1928, and I retired in 1971; 43 years I think it adds up to.

(Can you think of any highlights of your career?) In terms of sports, one of my highlights would be the year the 1945 golf team came within three strokes of winning the state golf title. So that was really a highlight for me as well as for the kids. We were leading the state finals down in Peoria. I had taken our team down there, and we were leading all through the tournament. As the last kids were coming in, in the last two or three groups, someone came running in from out on the course somewhere, and said the number five Rockford player was burning up the course. That kid came in with a score that was low enough to beat us with four strokes. The photographer had told me to get our kids lined up so he could take their picture, that's how close we came to winning the title. That was really a highlight.

(What changes have you noticed in McHenry?) To me the largest change has been McHenry changing from a small farming community to a much larger suburban commuting city. We have never regreted coming to McHenry. It has been our home since 1928, and will remain our home as long as we live.

Catherine Walsh Miller

Not many McHenry youngsters have a chance to count royalty among their young friends, but it wasn't always so.

More than 60 years ago Catherine (Walsh) Miller of 3710 W. Main Street had the experience of sharing a unique friendship with Jutta von Oberstadt, daughter of a German Count. So vivid are the memories that she recalls details as though they were yesterday.

The Count was a German spy imprisoned in England during the last days of World War I, according to Catherine's recollection. After the war ended in 1918 he came to this country because he was not allowed to return to his native Germany. His American born wife, who carried the name of the famous beer industrialist, Schoenhoefen, and daughter joined him later.

After residing for a time in one of the Lasch cottages along the Fox River, the Count purchased the stately, pre-Civil War home on Waukegan Street which thereafter was known as the Count's House. It is now included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Young Catherine Walsh lived then, as she does today, in the family homestead just a half block east of that house. Catherine was a young teenager, while Jutta von Oberstadt was a young adult with few local acquaintances.

Their friendship grew when the Count asked if Catherine would ride her pony with his daughter when she took her horse out for exercise. Catherine recalls how quiet and caring they were on their visit to Jutta's ailing horse, which was kept in a barn on the property across Main Street now owned by the family of Carl Weber.

Visits to the Count's House were a treat, Catherine remembers. She could hardly take her eyes from "the most beautiful couch in blue velvet that I had ever seen." She admits to having been shocked when, as a young girl unfamiliar with the world of Art, she saw a nude picture hanging in their front room.

One particular member of the family Catherine recalls with affection as "a wonderful woman." She was the German cook who came with the family to McHenry. The aroma and the taste of her culinary art are remembered with fondness even today.

Artist's rendition of the Count's House.

Her memory also extends to the day of the family's arrival, when their belongings came on a special rail car and were examined carefully by security police. She remembers, too, that for most of their stay in McHenry, Count Oscar von Oberstadt and his family were under guard.

It is no wonder that the romance surrounding the family should remain with the young McHenry girl who was a part of their life. How many teenagers have a friend engaged to a Persian Prince? Most often that kind of story is found only in fiction books.

The family would often travel to Chicago to attend the opera, and at one time they invited a local pastor to accompany them. In an adjoining theatre box was a lady attired in a dress which featured a rather slim strap. With humor, she remembers that a gentleman in the Count's party assured the pastor that the strap would stay in place.

Memories remain, but Catherine Miller has one regret. She failed to keep in touch with her young friend when the family moved from McHenry. And so it is that when Persian (now Iranian) royalty has made the headlines in American newspapers in recent years she has allowed herself a dream: Could this possibly be the royal family of which her friend, Jutta, had become a part?

Catherine will never be sure, but a dream is worth a lot with the passing of history.

Charles J. (Chuck) Miller

My mother's maiden name was Anna Young. She lived on a farm up between Johnsburg and Spring Grove. *(Was that known as German Prairie?)* Up in German Prairie, that's right. Her father farmed and also did custom threshing, back in the steam engine days for the farmers.

(Remember any of the farmers who were up there at that time?) Well, back at that time there were Millers, no relation to ours, and the Justens, and Freunds. There were quite a few Freunds that lived up there at that time. Mother went to school in Johnsburg. She was going to grade school in Johnsburg at the time the Johnsburg church burned. She would tell the story of how the kids, all during their recess, would help clean the bricks to rebuild the church.

My father's parents were from Elgin. I don't know exactly when he and my mother got married, but he was a blacksmith by trade. He had a blacksmith shop in McHenry. The original shop he had was in Ringwood. It used to be Pearson's garage in Ringwood. He built that building. And then for some time he was in Richmond, next to what's now the Old Mill Restaurant. We were on a farm at that time, and I remember when the Depression came, why, he lost everything. So then we moved into McHenry, next to the Adams' laundry on what is now Elm Street. That used to be Route 20 coming through.

(When you first went to school, where did you go to school?) At that time, we went to what they call the 'Hardscrabble School'. I remember we had Lena Stock; she was our school teacher. She was a wonderful person. She was a spinster who just drove up there, rain, snow or sleet. She was there every day at the school. I think there were about 12 or 14 of us in all in the total eight grades who went to school there at that time.

(When you got sick, what doctor did you go to?) Dr. Hepburn in Ringwood was the one my parents took all of us to. He used to come to the farm in a buggy. My mother was the midwife at that time. *(How did she get into that type of thing?)* She just had a lot of ambition and spunk, and she wasn't afraid to take the buggy and go. She never did learn how to drive a car. She could drive six- and eight-team horses on a grain binder, but she never could drive a car. Then when we moved to McHenry, why Dr. Klontz was our doctor. He was located at Waukegan Road and Green Street on the southwest corner. His wife then was a nurse, and she worked with him.

(Do you remember any of the stores that you might have shopped in? Were you an 'Overcricker'?) We were Westsiders. I remember Petey Schaefer. He was a great fellow. He still is. I remember the times when my mother used to give me two nickels to go get two beef hearts, and that's what we had for a meal.

(Do you remember playing on any ball teams at all when you were a kid?) Well, at that time I didn't play on the teams, I worked with what they called the McHenry Bums, and they used to play Johnsburg and Spring Grove and Algonquin. *(Who were some of the people on the Bums?)* Well, there was Spots Thurwell, he was a pretty famous pitcher, Jimmy Geier, I don't know but I think they're both passed away now. There was Sonny Phannenstill, he was a catcher, and some of the Andersons. John Anderson, he had Anderson's Barbecue Pit right where the First National Bank is now, and the ball park was right behind there. He had three sons, good ballplayers. Carl Anderson, Glenn, and Earl. *(Where did they get the name?)* McHenry Bums? Oh, I think they used to have a little home brew once in a while. *(How did they do as a team?)* I think it was probably pretty good, because I think if they couldn't get a fight between themselves they'd get a fight with Johnsburg. *(Did they get a good crowd for those games?)* Yes, they did get a good crowd. At that time I was oh, probably twelve years old, and I used to roast peanuts and popcorn and sell pop at the ball games. I worked for Lester Bacon, and he was a State Policeman at that time. He had the pool hall right straight across from the bank in West McHenry. I don't know if you remember that. The farmers all liked to go there when they brought the milk to town, and on rainy days.

(McHenry was quite a dairy area — were there specific days when they brought the milk to town?) Oh, that was every day. See, they didn't have the coolers in those days, and it was all just in tanks. From the big dairy, Borden's Dairy where Tonyan's Construction yard is now, they trucked the milk cans into Chicago. Every farmer had two sets of cans, and the one set was going to Chicago and coming back while he was filling the other one.

(Can you remember the first paying job that you got?) Well, I used to scrub floors for Mrs. Jack Walsh, that's Earl Walsh's mother, and Mrs. Simon Stoffel, and we had paper routes. That was the first means of any cash monies, and when I was fifteen I got a job on the section, working on the railroad, between Crystal Lake and Richmond. *(What kind of work was that?)* Well, tamping ties and putting new ties in, during the summer they'd hire extra people, and I remember Henry Anholtz, he was the section superintendent for many, many years. It was about 30 some cents an hour, which was good money in those days.

(About what year did you get into business for yourself?) I think it was 1938 that I got into the coal and ice business. Yeah, we used to get the coal by freight cars and deliver it out, and the ice we got out of Woodstock, out of the ice plant in Woodstock. I had ice routes in Wonder Lake, McCullom Lake, all up and down the river, Lily Lake. It was kind of fun, because you got to know so many people. It was interesting to see when the people would buy a summer home, and they'd be out for the summer, and the next year the kids would come back and they looked like they grew like weeds. *(Were there a lot of summer homes out here?)* Well, now most of them are converted into year-round homes. There was probably 80% summer homes.

(Tell us a little about the mining chain; when you started out, how did you mine gravel?) At that time we shoveled it by hand, and sorted the big stones out. You took it to the site and dumped it, and shoveled it from there into the mixers and then from there into the wheelbarrows, and from there into the forms. We couldn't afford a lot of big heavy equipment, we had to get started the best we could. *(Who were some*

of the people you had working for you at that time?) Well, at that time my two brothers, Eugene and Jerome, they worked for me, and, in fact, Phil Doherty, he's my oldest employee now. He worked for us then, just a young kid about fifteen years old. *(How far did you take that gravel?)* Before the war, if we went five miles, that was practically the limit. The main source of business was up and down the river and around the lakes for new homes and summer homes. There were quite a few jobs prior to the war, but they were real small jobs, cottages mostly.

(What happed during the war?) We all went into the service. *(Who took care of the gravel business then?)* I sold that to a couple of fellows in Wauconda. They formed the Wauconda Construction Company with the idea that once I got out of the service I was going to start up again. When I got out of the service, I bought quite a bit of the equipment back from them and got some new equipment. That's when we formed the McHenry Sand & Gravel. My brothers Gene, Jerome and I were partners in it. We've been that way ever since. *(When did you start getting some of your more sophisticated equipment?)* Probably in the real early 50's. The war seemed to change everybody's thinking. Equipment was available. We bought some war surplus mining and crushing equipment, bought some new, modern equipment, trucks and that, and then we went into the ready-mix concrete business about 1950. Our first plant was set up on Crystal Lake Road and Main Street. Right next to the old McHenry Flour Mill. We owned that for about twenty years. We bought the corner, and then we bought the rest of it because we needed more room. Finally, we outgrew the site, and that's when we moved out west of town.

Were you involved in any of the activities, like Little League?) Well, I never coached on Little League, but I was always very interested. We had three boys who played and we helped them build the Little League Park over at the VFW which turned out nice.

(You've spent all your life living here in McHenry — why?) It just seemed like there was something new here all the time. I remember the Schmitts owned this farm here where Edgebrook Heights is. I bought the farm from them. It was the first subdivision in McHenry to have sewer and water and paved streets.

(What do you remember what people did for entertainment?) They had quite good shows in the early days, and they had two bowling alleys, one on Green Street and one over across the river. Green Street was the center of activity more or less for the younger people. *(Were there a lot of dances?)* Back in those days it was barn dancing, which was kind of mixed more. The older folks went to the barn dances. Nell's ballroom had the big name bands come in there all the time, and they drew some big crowds. That was in Johnsburg, where the existing bowling alley is now. They had a fire there, I think it was in about '48 or '49, and then new owners took it over. *(Were there any located right here in the City of McHenry?)* Where the roller rink is now that was a ballroom, a dance floor. They used to have dances pretty near every Saturday night, and sometimes on Sunday evenings.

(What do you remember about McHenry's Centennial?) When they celebrated the Centennial, why I'll never forget, I used to mow James Mroz's lawn up at Pistakee Bay with a push mower, and he had about a seven-acre lawn with a big hill. He gave me a three-cylinder Charlie Chase truck, that was the name of it. It was built in England. I brought it home and we hauled the Centennial queens in there. This three-cylinder, hard rubber-tired, chain-driven truck. At the same time, my brother Nick played in the pageant where they blew up the dam. He'd spent quite a bit of time out West, so he knew how to ride horses, and he's the one who came riding in on the stage and took Dorothy Page away because he was stealing her away from somebody. *(They had a pretty good celebration then?)* Oh, they did. I thought it was good for that time. I never saw that many people in one place before, living in McHenry all my life.

Pete Schaefer's Market on the north side of Main Street in West McHenry.

Peter J. Schaefer

My father, Peter Schaefer, Sr., was born in Johnsburg in 1851, the son of John and Barbara Schmitt Schaefer. My dad and mother, the former Catherine Frett of Johnsburg, were married in 1880 in St. John's Church in Johnsburg. My parents spent their entire life in Johnsburg with the exception of a number of years spent in Chicago where my father was employed by the Omaha Packing Company. I was one of the children born in Chicago on January 12, 1896. I don't know how old I was when we returned to Johnsburg where my father took up farming. We settled north of Johnsburg near the Johnsburg High School of today. This area was called German Prairie in those days.

The farm was about 50 acres. We took one can of milk to the factory down in Johnsburg every day. Odie Murray owned the factory. They separated the milk there and took the cream and made butter in the factory. We took the canned milk back again and used the skimmed milk for the pigs. We also had one horse and a few cows. We had to do all the plowing with the one horse. I remember pulling weeds! There was not much cultivating because we had only that one horse. We had to plow the rows of corn and pull all the weeds by hand. Then I got to pick the corn and had to kneel to husk it.

We walked to school in Johnsburg every day — 4½ miles — and 4½ miles home again. There were two school buildings. One for the lower grades and one for the seventh and eighth grades. That one they tore down . . . the one for the lower grades burned down. The schools were southeast of the church.

We started school at 8 o'clock and went until 4 o'clock. Some of my classmates were Bill Althoff, Shootie Thelen, Lonny Michaels and Clara Schmitt. I remember two lay teachers — Emma Nye and Clara Molidor and of course the nuns. We had fun in those days. We were full of mischief! Lonny Michaels, Shootie Thelen and myself used to go down alongside the cemetery where there was a little creek running through the swamp. We would go out there and catch a bunch of grass snakes and put them in bottles. Then we would put them in the Sister's desk and leave the cork off. When she came in after lunch and opened her desk the snakes were all crawling around. Nobody would own up to it. But then Bill Althoff and Clara Schmitt went and snitched. Gee we really got a whipping then. They had a rawhide whip. You'd hold out your hand and you really got it. Boy would you get blisters! They didn't care how hard they hit you in those days. If any teacher did that in school today they would probably be fired, if not sued. Then one day we knew we had done something wrong again so we got the whip and hid it. We climbed up on top where the bell was and hid it up there. By gosh, if those two didn't tell on us again. They must have seen us do it — and we got it again!

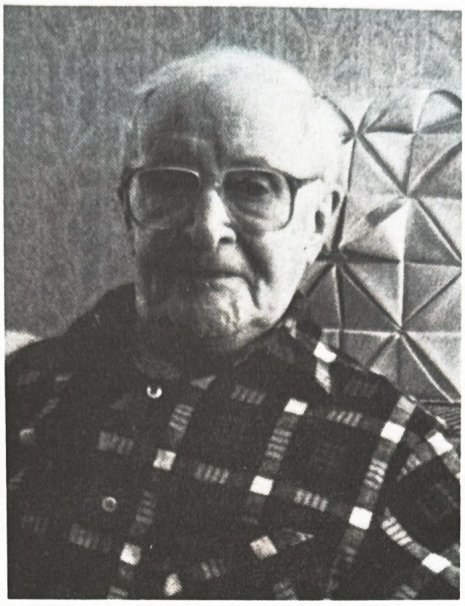
I can remember as a child getting all dressed up to go to church in the horse and buggy. We also went to visit neighbors. We had only one good suit — a dark wool one. I can remember my mother just putting me in the buggy and I wet my pants. As it was my only suit, we didn't go any place that day.

I remember my dad loved all the animals. He would allow no harm to befall them. He once really scolded us boys for shooting at the birds with slingshots . . . stating that they were God's creatures and harmed no one. He loved nature and took long walks over the countryside to visit his neighbors.

I went back to Chicago about 1910 where I worked for my brother Ben and learned the Grocery & Market business. Then I went to work for Frank Meany. In 1918 I was able to borrow $2,000 from Dressel Brothers (I'm sure you have eaten their cakes) and bought the business from Meany at the age of 22. I married Marie Maher in 1918 and in 1922 sold my store in Chicago and moved to McHenry for health reasons. I worked for Pete Frett who had a meat market on Main Street. He was located where Phylly's Inn is now. I worked as a butcher and then went to work with Pete Heimer in Barbians on Riverside Drive.

In 1923 I answered an ad in the Chicago paper — store for sale — and bought the fixtures for $700. Had them moved to McHenry and opened my own Grocery & Market in the Ben Brefeld building located west of the Ford Garage. Roy Henkermeir was in there before me. In the back of the building Jake Gray had a boarding house and served very good meals.

About 1930 when Bill Althoff moved his Hardware Store to the corner where Christopher's Men's Store is now located, I moved my business into the Justen building he vacated. Morrie Crouch opened a Flower Shop in the store I left and later when he moved across the street, Nick Nett opened a Tavern and restaurant in the building. After that the building was torn down and the location became Buss Ford's parking lot.



The Stock Yards were located in the block behind my first store. They were there when I came to McHenry. It was great to see all those cattle coming in there. I don't remember when they tore them down but I do remember some of my kids playing on the fences after they stopped bringing the cattle through, and those two children were born in 1923 and 1924.

In the early days we used to get all the meat by train. You had to go to the train house to pick it up. No truck delivery to your door like today. People used to bring in eggs and calves to the store in exchange for groceries. West McHenry was a busy place.

We had Spencer's Mill and across from there was the Creamery. Borden's Milk Factory was down on the Mill Pond. Louis Ericksen had a Department Store on the northeast corner of Main and 31. He had everything in that store. A dance hall was upstairs where many good times were had. I think the telephone office was in that building too. Popp's Shoe Store was across the street and John Knox had a restaurant in the present Paint Store, with Walt Freund having a Tire Repair Shop behind that. Upstairs was another hall where a group of ladies called the Royal Neighbors met and also many card parties were held there.

Gorman's had The Park Hotel right behind Ericksens where the present Harborside Garage is. That was on the east side of 31. Across the street on the west side of 31 Overton had his garage selling carriages during the horse and buggy days followed by the sale of automobiles.

I recall a man named Diedrich who had a horse and buggy service to take you to Johnsburg for a quarter, and another quarter for the return trip. That was before the automobiles.

On the northwest corner of Main and 31, Martin Schmitt had the Bowling Alley, later owned by Harry Clark. This is the building Althoff moved his Hardware Store to. Joe Freund had a Men's Clothing Store. A.E. Nye had the Jewelry Store. John Stoffel, a dry goods store, Matt Thelen a repair shop for harnesses, and of course we had the Bank and Post Office next to Justen's Furniture Store. Voght owned the Drug Store and we also had a barber shop and a dentist.

The Northwestern Hotel did a good business with the train station being right next to it. The Weber home was located back from the street, on Main, in the spot where the Tax Accessor's office used to be. They ran the Hotel. In their front yard we used to have band concerts.

In the early years Lou Althoff had a Blacksmith Shop next to the train tracks and Matt Bauer had the Ice House. The kids loved it when the Ice Man came around. Bordens, too, cut ice from the Mill Pond, but I think it was only for their own use in cooling the milk.

I can remember all the rail business in the old days. Everything came by train. I also remember the Hobos . . . especially Bradley and Hoover. They would do a full day's work for 25¢ and a hot meal and you never feared them being around your family. The Hobos camped under the railroad bridge north of town.

During the depression it was hard times. I had over 100 customers unable to pay. It was tough, but we got through it. At that time I was able to have a chicken house in the back of my store, so you know we had fresh chickens. They were big sellers. Hamburger too was a big item — selling for about 2 pounds for 25¢.

During the War years ration stamps and coupons were difficult to keep track of. Meat was scarce and eggs too. I always had home delivery service as far away as McCullom Lake and Pistakee Bay. Gas was hard to get and tires too were a problem. It was a hard time for everyone. Our boys were all in the Service, but again we got through it.

In 1968, at the age of 72, I put the key in the door of my store for the last time.

Eva Bacon Sparks

I was born on a farm in Barrington. When I was 9 months old my folks moved up to Cuttington, Wis. where I lived until I was thirteen, when we moved back to Barrington, then to Woodstock, then to McHenry. My father helped build the Pistaqua Heights Country Club, which is no longer. We lived up there for the summer and then the McHenry Laundry was for sale and my mother had worked in a laundry for a long time so she talked my dad into buying the laundry. That's how we got established in McHenry. The laundry was located right where the Cadillac Garage is across from the First National Bank. That was the laundry basement, and it burned in 1931.

(When you were growing up, where did you go to school?) I went up in Wisconsin and then I went to High School over in Woodstock. I never went to school when we moved to McHenry, so I didn't finish High School, but I've had a lot of education with the schooling that I got with the Assessor's Association, going to their sessions. My husband, Lester Bacon who I married in 1930, was elected as assessor. He was assessor for 14 years before he died and the two years would make it 16 and I was appointed, so it would have been 20 years all together that I worked.

(What did you like most about being an assessor?) I liked meeting the people. I got along pretty good with them in spite of the antagonism of me being a woman. Any problems that they had, I tried to work it out with them and I tried to help them whenever I could.

(What were some of the things that people misunderstood most about the assessing process?) Well, you get more for your money with your assessment than any other dollar that you spend. Because you get your school, your police, your firemen, your road commissioner and so you get all of those things that you couldn't afford. You couldn't afford to get a fireman to come to your house if you had a fire for just the amount of your assessment. Your assessment dollars that you pay in, you get more for your money on that than anything else you buy. I didn't understand any of these things either until I became assessor. I never regretted any taxes that I had to pay after that. But people aren't educated. They just think that they are paying too much and they don't want to find out what their money is going for.

(What about your family life?) Well, Lester was a World War I Veteran. I was only married to him for a month when they got me into the Legion Auxiliary. We went to all of the Legion and Auxiliary doings together. I held all of the offices in the Legion Auxiliary. I also joined the Eastern Star. I was a member of the Masonic Order. My heart seemed to be with the Legion Auxiliary so I wasn't that active with the Eastern Star, but I've been a member for over 50 years.

(You spent a lot of time in McHenry and in this area. If you had to do it again, would you?) Oh, I have always enjoyed living in this area. I would have never moved away at all if my second husband hadn't wanted to go to Southern Illinois to retire. That is where he came from. After he was down there for three years he said, "The biggest mistake of my life was moving away from McHenry."

Henry B. (Hank) Tonyan

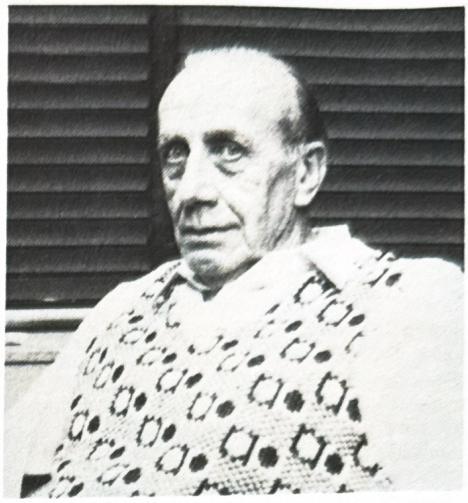
My father's name was Henry, my mother's name was Elizabeth. They had ten children and I am the youngest.

(Where did you grow up?) Out in Pistakee Bay. *(What was Pistakee Bay like at that time? Were there a lot of big homes out there?)* There were big homes down Bay View Lane and Regner Road. The people only lived there in the summer time. At that time you could swim in all of Pistakee Bay, the water was real clean. We could go out there in the boat and ski.

(How about schooling?) Well, we went to a one room school — Lincoln School where the teacher taught all 8 grades in one room. We used to walk across the fields. The fields we used to cross were part of my Dad's farm and now the State of Illinois has purchased that land for part of the Volo Bog.

(Did you have much contact with the summer people who used to come out and live on the Bay?) I met Mr. Skidmore many times. I caddied for him when he owned the Pistakee Bay Country Club. I also caddied for some of his associates. *(Describe Mr. Skidmore.)* He was a very refined man who tipped well. In those days he was a big spender. He did very well for the people who worked for him. He had a great deal to do with the economic development of this county. When he purchased all this land around here, he employed a great many people who were unemployed. He employed carpenters, farm hands, laborers. He owned 4 or 5 farms within a radius of 3 or 4 miles.

(What history can you give us on Tonyan Construction Company?) My two older brothers, Bill and George started it. Prior to 1925 they had a small construction company that made sidewalks and seawalls in Pistakee. They also, at that time, still kept some horses to haul gravel in what we called a gravel wagon. The gravel came off the farm land. The gravel wagon was different than the usual farm wagon. The configuration and design of the box. You had boards that came up and the gravel went down underneath it. We always took gravel off the farm. Gravel, sand. We would have to separate the gravel and sand. There would be certain pockets and the veins we would call a small mine that would contain sand and then other areas that would contain the coarser material. They would just load up the sand right out of the banks and, I expect in some cases, they would use a screen for getting very fine sand. They would make a frame out of 2x4's and tack the screening on it, then force the granular material against it and the fine sand ran out with the stones remaining.



The business grew until the Depression came. They were able to maintain the business, though. Two of my brothers worked elsewhere and one worked here. Their business in McHenry originally started out on a farm on Bay Road when they were working for the summer residents out there. Although the present building is the old Borden Plant, we did not purchase it from Borden but from another party.

(Before you became involved with the Company, do you recall any of the buildings your brothers built?) One I distinctly remember is what is now St. Mary's School. I was in high school at the time and I know I worked part time for $12.00 a week.

(What was McHenry like in 1947?) A very rural town. I can't recall exactly but I think the population was around 1,300 or 1,500. Most of the people in the area were still farmers. There was somewhat of a building boom after the second World War. A great deal of activity. I can remember working on Saturdays when there would be people waiting out in the corridor to get in to see us.

There were building permits then but getting one was a very simple procedure. There were very few building codes, it was more a matter of getting the building permit. You didn't even need a licensed architect. We did a lot of our own design and building work. We had our own drafting department and draftsman. We designed the building from foundation to completion. That's why we had so much business, because we could do the entire package.

(Will you recall some of the buildings that you designed in this area?) The Overton Garage is one I can recall on the corner of Front and Waukegan Roads. That is one I did personally. I was very proud of that one. It had a circular front and circular windows. We worked very closely with Mayor Overton (he was Mayor of McHenry) and owned the business there.

There were other structures that Tonyan Construction built in McHenry including what is now the McHenry Savings Bank, but what was formerly the American Legion building. We did that project. Also St. Patrick's School, St. Mary's School, Edgebrook School, McHenry Jr. High, and we also remodeled the Landmark School. We also built West Campus.

◀ *Hoeppe Brothers While-Away Resort located in Woodlawn Park Subdivision on the east side of the Fox River in the early 1900's.*

Leone Freund Tonyan

(Editor's Note: We were intrigued by the fact that no mention was made in the 1936 book about the draining of the Mill Pond; and yet, no one single event has had more impact on the city's growth and development.

From stories we hear told, the draining of this 60-acre pond was quite a controversial subject. Some people had visions of McHenry becoming a "Venice on the Fox". Although the draining of the pond ended all those dreams, it did bring the three districts of McHenry together and opened a thoroughfare which was destined to become the heartline of the city.)

The Bordon Milk Company had put in the dam in a line just south of George Justen's Funeral home, which in effect flooded the land and created the Mill Pond.

The pond extended in width from behind St. Mary's Church to the Bordon Factory. The Bordon factory was located where Tonyan Construction is now.

During the winter months the pond was used as a source for cutting ice. By 1927 they had almost ceased cutting ice cubes, ice chunks.

(So, approximately what time do you think the draining of the pond occurred?) It must have been the fall of 1927 or the spring of 1928. Because, we moved into the large grey house on the corner of Richmond Road and Maple Avenue on March 3, 1928. We had eight children in our family. My grandpa, Stephen H. Freund, sold the farm we were living on, which was called the Riverside Dairy Farm. We supplied all of McHenry with milk. My grandpa sold the farm to some outfit who made a golf course out of it. The golf course is not here anymore. They went broke during the Depression. They couldn't keep it up.

In the meantime, we were notified that as of March, 1928, we would have to move. My father (A.P. Freund) looked around McHenry for a home. Anybody that had a house large enough for our family, was already living in it. There was absolutely no house we could move into with eight kids.

So, we bought that piece of property from Mrs. John Knox on Richmond Road. There was sixteen feet which Maple Avenue has been made out of, and he bought that too.

He started building the house in the fall of 1927. My grandfather built the house. We moved in 1928. We moved in from the farm in March. Richmond Road was not paved yet — it was a dirt road. They took all the furniture up to the end of Washington Street and there they put planks across Richmond Road to the front door of our new house.

Also, just prior to this they had moved those two houses up there in the mud. Boy, was that a mess. *(What two houses — the Perry home?)* Yes, I mean the two houses that neighbor our house to the north. They were moved about 1927, prior to the draining of the pond. They both stood originally at the intersection where Elm Street is now. Elm Street and Richmond Road. You see, prior to that, the only way to get to the west side of town was to go down Green Street and over. Well, then they took the Perry house and that other house out, moved them down Richmond Road by the cemetery, drained the pond, and then they extended Elm Street across where the Mill Pond had been.

The Mill Pond looking east with St. Mary's Church in the background, c. 1910.

My father (A.P. Freund), Dr. Klontz, Mr. Mosher from the Plaindealer, Roy and Merwin Kent, got together and formed a syndicate and bought the land under water. They knew the dam was going to come out, and they knew there would be empty land. Whoever owned it would want to get rid of it, and they bought it for a song because it was still under water.

My grandfather was really upset with my father. By that time we had nine kids in the family. My grandpa said . . . "obviously he's gone crazy." In the meantime, my Dad bought the first crane that had ever been in McHenry. He bought in not knowing how to operate it. The first basement he dug was the Carey building. They destroyed three stores there. That was the first basement that was ever dug with a crane. Up till that time, it was done with horses and a scoop shovel.

That's when he dredged this creek (channel), as his share of the buy-in. He had gotten some lots. In fact, that's why this is called Freund Avenue, because he got these lots along here.

You know, when they took that dam out, everybody howled and yelled. Oh, the most beautiful spot in town! It was lover's lane. Oh, but it was full of mosquitoes and the wood in the dam was so rotten. A good, heavy rain would have burst the dam.

(Do you recall when the ice factory burnt down?) No, but it was some time after that. They had ceased to make ice when it burned down. It was connected with the Bordon Co.

Oh, yes. I remember as a child . . . I was fascinated with that building. I just peeked in

the door once. The ice was stored in sawdust and straw (slough hay). They would put in a layer of ice, then a layer of hay and sawdust, and then put in another layer of ice, etc. They kept it frozen year round. The building had double wall insulation — it didn't melt.

You see, they bottled the milk here in McHenry and put it in cases and then they'd throw chips of ice in the cases. They also shipped ice out of here to Chicago. That was before refrigerated cars and all. You see, with the refrigerated cars and the bulk tank milk trucks, there was not much need for the ice.

Yes, when I was a kid at St. Mary's, you know, they'd let us come down here at recess time and ice skate. It was so beautiful! But it ceased to have the meaning it was put here for. And so, the dam was torn down and the Mill Pond was drained.

The dam on the Fox River.

Mary Althoff Vycital

(How did you get to school?) We had to go all of the way east on Waukegan Road, through Centerville, around the corner where the Jake Justens had their store on Green Street and Elm and head west around the corner north to St. Mary's. There was a way across the dam back of what is now Landmark. It was called the Public Grade School at that time. Under pain of mortal sin we weren't supposed to go across that dam because two Buss children had been drowned at that spot. Every once in awhile we did sneak across, because it was much shorter than going all of the way around and most of us walked that long distance to school. Many of the children who lived on farms, John Herdrich, for instance, lived way beyond the Sutton's Farm, toward the McHenry Dam. They all walked to school. Some of them got rides with the milk wagons when they would come in the morning. I can remember when they would bring the milk to Borden's factory in the wintertime on bobsleds. Then you could flip bobs.

I remember when Route 120 went through and the dam was blown up with dynamite. For a time there, we could sort of sneak across the road before it was finished. You'd be a little sloppy by the time you got to school. It probably was an annoyance to the nuns, but it didn't bother us.

(What impressions do you have about going to St. Mary's School?) When I got to St. Mary's, it was a four-room school. There were two grades to each room. I had come from Ringwood, which had a two-room school. It was kind of frightening for me. I was seven and at the end of second grade. I remember the nun used to have us stand up in a long line in reading class and we'd read our lesson. If you made a mistake and some child could correct you, that child would take your place: all of us were trying to become first in line.

(Who were some of your classmates?) Oh my. Evelyn Freund, Olga Brefeld, Marie Miller, Eunice Marshall, Robert Frisby, Roy Blake, John Herdrich, Rita (Freund) Saylor, Lucille Steffes, George Larkin, and Rita Martin.

(When you were growing up, in the summertime, what were some of your great adventures?) Well, we used to like to go to Hanly's Woods and pick blackberries. That is where Whispering Oaks is now, and it was a fine blackberry area. We could pick a pail of blackberries in nothing flat around those Oak trees. That was a good chore, plus we could get all purple, and black, and eat to your heart's content. It was something that we enjoyed doing. We used to walk the tracks quite a bit. We could find violets, cowslips, cattails, and pussy willows along the tracks. We would, of course, be terror-stricken, because there was a hobo camp right under the bridge (north of town), probably at the Boone Creek bridge.

(By and large would you say your memories of growing up were pretty good ones?) Yes, I don't remember that we had much time to play. We were always busy. I can remember when the Adams came to live next door to us. They had a laundry. I can recall I was quite young when I would hang up laundry for them and go to the laundry to work in the summer. There was no air conditioning. I can just remember that heat coming up at me when there would be four girls running the big mangles. I made the fantastic sum of about 25 cents an hour. Of course, those were the depression years, too.

(How did your family weather the depression?) We always had enough to eat and we always had enough to wear. Certainly we were not very flooded with money. By today's standards, the going was far from smooth.

Most of the residents of the McHenry area struggled through, but it was because they didn't take much of a salary, they just got along on as little as they could. They had chickens and gardens. They canned for the winter and were extremely thrifty. It's hard to realize how all of us lived through that on such little money. I can remember going to college, and I believe I was the proud owner of two dresses. Margaret Larkin was my room mate and we were not at all the same size. We could exchange blouses fairly well, but we had trouble with skirts, but we did it anyway. It was almost unbelievable when you think about it. I was recently looking at an expense book that I had kept — can you imagine that at that time we could buy a pound of hamburger for 12 cents! If we walked a good long ways we could buy a bunch of carrots for 2 cents. We probably wore out more shoe leather doing it than it was worth. It's hard to really imagine that that was the way it was. We didn't expect anything and were grateful for what we received.

Children were very different than they are today. At that time, you really didn't have to worry about challenging them. School was a pleasure for them. For example, the boys who were in my class that year, most of them had milked cows before they came to school. Of course, the schoolroom smelled like a cow barn most of the day, but you got used to it. It seemed like the pupils were pleased to be there and you didn't have to challenge them to get them to feel interested.

Of course, we had the little old outhouses outside. The only good thing about that was that whenever they asked to go to the bathroom, I was pretty sure it was a necessary call. Winters were cold and the wind would blow up those holes like nothing you could imagine, and when it was warm it was full of bees and flies. Consequently, it was not the most comfortable place in the world to be.

There were chores for the children to do. With the coal furnace, there were always ashes and there was coal to be brought in from the woodshed outside. Every Monday morning there was a whole flock of mice that needed attention. I used to think that mice were little gray critters. Well, we had some fairly large animals there. They were these white-bellied, brown-backed field mice. I finally learned that if I put an old oil can with slick sides, and placed it by the outdoor vent, they would fall into that bucket and couldn't get out. The 8th grade boys would take them outside and set them free. We would start the whole process over again the next week. I don't think we ever got rid of them. It was an ongoing procedure. Between the furnace and the mice, it was quite an experience, I'll tell you.

(What do you remember about the Vycital's Hardware Store when you first started out?) The first year there was honest to goodness hardware in it. Later, you got into housewares, gifts, etc. In the 20's and 30's, it was more builder's hardware, farm equipment. We had more smaller farms around and they would use brooder houses, chicken equipment, etc.

Builders got to the point, too, where they got big enough and they wouldn't go through a hardware store anymore but would buy direct-

The John Vycital Family is lined up in their bathing suits eating watermelon. The picture was taken behind the present Office Shop on Green Street during the 1900's.

ly from the factory. That part of the sales sort of fell off as the years went by.

(What was it like on Green Street for the Merchants?) I think that the part that was difficult for the small merchants was that he wasn't making as much money as the chain stores that would come in, but he was expected to be a benevolent city father. Every time there was a civic function or project he was expected to support it. If a plea for help was presented to the many chains that were coming into this area, they had this lovely form letter that they would send you stating that they appreciated your problem but it is their policy to not contribute to any of these things. A small merchant could not get away with that. Many of his customers were also his friends and he couldn't say no. They used to have disagreements over what days to stay open, what nights to stay open. As far as I can remember, they never did resolve it.

The Shriners float shown during a Fiesta Days Parade on Green Street with Landmark School in the background.

(Can you summarize for us some of your feelings about McHenry?) Perhaps Edgar Guest said it all in the last verse of "The Home Town."

"The home town has a treasure which the distance cannot gain,
It is there the hearts are kindest, there the gentlest friends remain,
It is there a mystic something seems to permeate the air
To set the weary wanderer to wishing he were there;
And be it great or humble, it still holds mankind in thrall,
For the home town, the home town, is the best town after all."

Mr. Earl Walsh

I grew up on the West side of McHenry. Those were the days when there was quite a division in the town — East side . . . West side, and Boone crick was the dividing line. If you lived on one side or the other, they called you an over-cricker, and there was many a battle between both sides of town.

It was a village to begin with. It didn't become a city until 1923. There was an unwritten law — they would have a village president from one side of town, and the next time they would have to have the president from the other side. There was great division and rivalry. During World War I, they had benefits like ball games from the businessmen, and it would be East side against West side. That's how divided it was.

My father came from Ireland when he was 14 years of age. He and his father came over here. My aunt and uncle, who are long deceased, told me that they came over here and earned money to send back to bring the rest of the family over here from Ireland. They worked in Hanly's brick yards to earn the money. My grandfather was a stone mason, building stone buildings around the area. My father worked on a farm until he was 30 years of age. They say McHenry was getting kind of wild with saloons, getting a little bit tough and they wanted to hire a man to straighten that out. He was a husky Irishman, a natural policeman, and they brought him in and gave him a job. He only earned $48/month to begin with. He cleaned up the saloons anyhow. There were a lot of fights in those days, and they needed a husky policeman. The fact of the matter was, he used to be teased about never making an arrest, and his answer was that his job was to keep people out of trouble, not to get them into it. Then they teased him about wearing a gun but never pulling it. But he said he'd never pull it unless he was going to shoot it.

My Mother was a school teacher after graduating from high school. She was in the first class that graduated from McHenry High School, and she taught at Irish Prairie School, the building was right across the street from the Walter Bolger Farm. She rode horseback to work, to school, and she had to start her own fire in the morning; but it was a good job. She got $18/month for that work, anyway.

Back to my father, you know they had only one policeman in town then. They called him the chief of police, well he was chief because there weren't any other policemen. It started out they called him marshal, town marshal, but he was also the truant officer, deputy sheriff. He had all the titles for law enforcement that were going around, cause as I say, he was the only one. He kind of ruled with an iron hand, but he was kindhearted and was very good with children. He loved children. He didn't want anybody threatening their children that they'd get the policeman after them, because he wanted to be friends with the children.

(When he was the policeman, were there phones? How did people get ahold of him if they needed him? Was he on duty all of the time?) He was on duty 24 hours a day. He'd come in sometimes late at night and lie down on the couch and take a nap, and he'd be up again to go out on the streets and see that things were alright. I think they had phones at the time. I'm sure they did. But many times people would come to the house, too. He never had a car until later years. We had a Ford when we were all grown up. He had a horse and buggy — that's how he got around, when he wasn't walking.

Soap Box Derby with City Hall on Green Street shown in the background.

(Where did you go to school?) Landmark School. *(Do you remember any of your teachers?)* Oh, I remember a lot of them. I went 12 years there. I remember John Looze asked me one time if it took me 12 years to go through grade school. The grade school was downstairs and the high school upstairs when I first went there. But I remember a lot of my teachers. *(Who was your favorite?)* I think Miss Pryor in high school. She was everybody's friend. She was a very large lady. She used to think she could fool us comin' down the hall sometimes, but you could hear the floors creaking when she came. She knew everybody's little love affairs and all their troubles in school, just a friend to everybody.

Our sports teams weren't so good when I was in school. But we went to Woodstock, Crystal Lake. I remember going to Crystal Lake in a bobsled. We tipped over on Paine's Hill. By the time we got down there, we were frozen. *(Where was Paine's hill?)* That's on Crystal Lake Road. Way down — just before you get to Crystal Lake.

We tipped over in the bobsled and nearly froze to death. We got beat pretty badly that night. We couldn't move. We had a few fights which warmed us up, but we didn't make many baskets. *(Did a lot of the parents and people go with you?)* No, not much. That came later on. See, we didn't have cars to travel in then. Like we played up at, they called it Genoa Junction in those days, it's Genoa City now. But we took the train up there and stayed all night in a hotel. Nearly froze to death there, too. I remember we left our clothes on and we were still cold, so we got up and pulled the rug off the floor and put that over us.

(Let's go back a minute. Can you remember where your folks did their shopping? I imagine you did most of yours in West McHenry.) Yes, practically all of it. Well, my Uncle had a store down there, a general merchandise store, M.J. Walsh. That's where a restaurant is now. It's right across from the Chinese restaurant on Main Street. It was on the north side of the street. F.A. Bolander had a big store where the apartment building is there on the northeast corner of Main Street and Front (Rt. 31). They had a big store. We did some shopping there. Everybody knew when you shopped at Bolanders, cause they used red wrapping paper. When you went out in the street, why they knew where you bought it!

In those days the merchants would deliver with horse and buggy or a little wagon. You could call in your order and they'd deliver even a small order. My mother went sometimes, sent us kids sometimes, too. Usually sent me just when I was playing ball or something. I never knew why she used so much thread, where she could use it — she was always calling me in to go downtown to get a 10-cent spool of white thread. I don't know where she used all that thread!

(Do you remember when the bank in West McHenry was robbed?) Yeah, I do remember it. I've tried to figure out the year and I can't. I can't find anything on it either. These hoodlums had a cottage down there in the Country Club Addition. Bruce Nichols was in the hardware store across the street and he was quite a marksman in the rifle club, and when they pulled out with their car, why he took shots at them. But they went down around the McHenry Lumber Yard down on Crystal Lake Rd., and they tore down there. Nichols had a high-power rifle shooting at them. He had to be pretty careful after that. I heard he did receive some threats, but I couldn't verify that. *(Did they ever catch the bank robbers?)* Yes, they did. No problem identifying them. They didn't have masks evidently, they had to go into the bank and they were scared to death to go in to identify them, but they went. Three Fingers White was one of the famous hoodlums in those days. He was one of the robbers.

McHenry was a saloon town. One time Woodstock went dry. They voted it dry. They could do that. Everybody came from Woodstock over here to do their drinking. I think we had a saloon on every corner and one in between the block in those days. The city depended on the tavern licenses to exist. That's where their main income came from. I remember well that was the main source of income, the tavern license.

(When you were growing up, can you think of any people that stand out in your memory from around McHenry?) Well, there were some distinguished people. You know we used to have a Universalist Church, which became the Masonic Hall later. I think all the elite in McHenry went there. They were the best dressed and dignified. Well, I'm thinking of James B. Perry. He was very prominent in McHenry. He ran the bank. Oh, I guess he did about everything that was within the law. He practiced law practically, without a license. He was probably one of the most prominent men that we had.

(How about when you were growing up, what was your first paying job?) I think the first check of any size that I ever got was when they were building the McHenry Country Club in 1922 and I got a job down there for seventy dollars a month. I remember running home with that check to my Mother, and that was big pay in those days.

(We were talking before about the division between West McHenry and the rest of McHenry — Centerville. It was always pretty strong?) Yes. Boone crick divided east side, west side — and of course, you know that west side was Gagetown and Green Street was Centerville and old Riverside Drive area was Old Town, but the crick divided it. Centerville and Old Town were together, and when there was a division, like a political division, why it was east side, west side — that's all there was to it.

(Do you remember much about the Mill Pond? Did you spend a lot of time down there?) We used to skate there. There was fishing there too. Of course, they fished there at the dam that ran down into Boone Creek. That was the beauty spot of McHenry at one time — quite the place. *(Quite large, too, wasn't it?)* Oh, yeah! I think Borden's owned it at the time, and they used to cut ice there; others did too — Matt Bauer cut ice there. He had an icehouse. He cut and delivered ice in the summertime. But he stored it up in his icehouse. Borden's made ice and shipped it into Chicago. It was a treacherous pond. Some people drowned in it. It was quite deep. But it was a great place for skating!

(Why did they drain the pond?) Well, there were some people in McHenry — a group of them, decided to drain it and subdivide and make money on it and so that's how it went. One story is that the dam went out, and that caused it. But I don't remember that. They condemned those people that subdivided it quite a lot. But they were out to make money — and they did. And, away went the pond.

(When people wanted to have a good time in McHenry, what did they do for entertainment?) Well, they had a lot of dances. They had those way back in the beginning — like down at Riverside Hotel. That was the main spot for dances and there was a livery barn across the way south of there where Petals and Stems Flower Shop is now. And they used to come in there in horse and buggy. The New Year's Eve dances, I guess they'd dance till morning, from what my Mother told me anyhow. Twelve o'clock, they'd serve lunch. They charged about $2 for a couple and that included taking care of your horse and buggy.

We had a lot of dances at Stoffel Hall. That's where the apartment building is on the corner of Main and Front Streets now. That was the big hall in those days. All the proms were held there, school proms. And we had parties. It seems like we had house parties all the time, for young people's amusement.

They had a hall down here on Riverside Drive — Weber's Hall. Finally, it was condemned. It was leaning over so far, they were afraid it was going to fall down. But we used to get together, a bunch of young people. We'd pay $2 a night to rent that hall. The boys would pay for the bread and meat for sandwiches, and the girls would make them up. We didn't have any drinks! Soft drinks only, no drinking allowed. But, we had a lot of parties right there, a lot of good times.

(What happened to the McHenry Brewery when prohibition came in?) Well, when prohibition came, they had to close down. Except, they did take the front part where the restaurant is now, and they had, as they called them, the "Blind Pigs" — they were open. A lot of these places were open. They must have had some arrangements made with authorities. Not local authorities, I know that, but other authorities I'm quite sure. They couldn't have stayed open unless they had some arrangement. Once in a while, they'd have a raid. Federal men would come in and they'd raid them. But usually they were tipped off before they got here, anyhow — they'd close up for that day.

(What do you remember about the Centennial Celebration in McHenry fifty years ago?) Well, a lot of old-timers came back. It was a lot of fun. They were here, some of them were here a couple of weeks in advance. They were roaming around the town, visiting. I was going around town visiting old friends, walking the streets, remembering who lived here and who lived there. There was a lot of sociability going on. They had a picnic, a big roast in the park, Pearl Street, that's the only park we had then.

(Let's back up a little bit. What was the wildest prank you ever played?) Well, I don't know. My Father was the policeman, and I wasn't suppose to do things, under wraps. But I remember one time at Halloween we went down to the West side and tipped over an outhouse. My Father must have been watching us cause I went right home and when I got home he was there. He said, well, you tipped it over, I suppose you'll have to put it back again. He saw everything that went on!

(Did you go trick-or-treating?) Yeah, I did, but I had to be pretty careful — my father being policeman and he didn't want the shame of it.

(Halloweens sound like they were pretty hard on outhouses!) Yeah, that was a big sport. Well,

they'd hit farm machinery, too. They'd get it into town somehow, the older boys. But that came later in the night. They'd stay up late. Little kids were trick-or-treating, but they'd have to get home early. The older boys would bring farm machinery in. I remember at the school, they had the doors blockaded with farm machinery — you couldn't get in. But my father didn't have a car and he was the only policeman, couldn't watch them all. Actually, it was kind of fun to go around the next day to see all the tricks that were pulled.

Of course, they hit the Methodist Church every year. I wasn't in on that one. They'd tie a string on the bell, how they got up there I don't know, they must have been bigger boys. Then they took the string across the street, you know where the Webers live now — the Count's House. They'd take it way over there and that yard was filled with bushes and flowers. Kids would hide in there with this string, ran way across the street, and late at night they'd ring that bell. Every Halloween it rang. Why they didn't find a way to stop it I'll never know, but we were sure that it was going to happen!

(That reminds me, speaking of bells ringing, were bells rung when they had a fire in town?) No, they rand the Borden's whistle. They rang it every day at noon anyhow. But when there was a fire, they'd have one . . . two . . . three toots. You could tell what part of town it was in that way. And they had these fire carts with the hose on and they'd get a team of horses going through with a wagon. They'd stop them and hitch this on and rush to the fire. They didn't have much to work with then. *(Where did they get the water?)* Oh, they had fire plugs, and they had pretty good pressure, too. There was no pumper to pump the water up to heights, just the pressure from the mains. That's all they had.

(Maybe you could tell us what you remember about McHenry in each of the eras. How would you characterize McHenry in the 20's, the 30's, 40's, etc.) Well, I would say before the 20's it was quite stable except as I mentioned, the saloon fights and things like that. Didn't have much trouble in the town. Family quarrels, my father would have to go and settle those sometimes. Of course, the the 20's — they called it the Gay Twenties and there was a lot of drinking going on then. Prohibition came in during that time. Told people they couldn't drink and that made drinkers out of them. So, there was a lot of whoopie going on then. Those were the days of the flappers, flapper skirts and all that stuff. So, they called them the Gay Twenties — they were! Things settled down after that as they ran into the Depression years.

(Did you feel the Depression much, your folks and you?) Well, we didn't feel it out here in the country as fast as they did in Chicago. Things clamped down there, they felt the Depression terribly right away. But out here everybody . . . well, being a farming community there was food anyhow and, like my parents, had a garden — must have been a half-acre of land in garden and they put everything in that cellar, saved it for the winter. And, of course, my mother canned all summer, put up fruits and vegetables. Had a lot of food. Baked your own bread. If you went to the store and bought a loaf of bread, that was a real treat, 5 or 10-cent loaf, and 10-cent that was a big loaf. So, we didn't feel it as soon. Although, when it did hit, it hit pretty hard around here, men were working for a dollar. Married men with families were working for a dollar a day, enough to squeeze by. The Red Cross was quite active with helping people then. They had to scrimp a lot just to raise their family. Nothing cost very much. A dollar went quite a ways.

(Do you remember the big snow storm of '36?) Oh, yeah! The trains couldn't get through. They hired men to shovel. South of town was bad and they had a lot of men went down there with shovels. They were hired to dig it out. Of course, they had one-way from here to Woodstock. If you went to Woodstock, you had to go around by Crystal Lake to get back. There was only one track. It was really bad. High banks — we were pretty well snowed in.

(What do you remember about the 40's?) Well, of course, World War II. The forties everybody was steamed up about the war — mad at the Japs. There were still some pretty bad times then. In the forties there wasn't any building going on, until later in the forties. There wasn't a new house going up in McHenry. And there was a shortage of homes then at that time. You couldn't hardly find a place to rent.

This 1911 picture shows the Lewis Bishop barber shop on the west side of Riverside Drive the morning after Halloween.

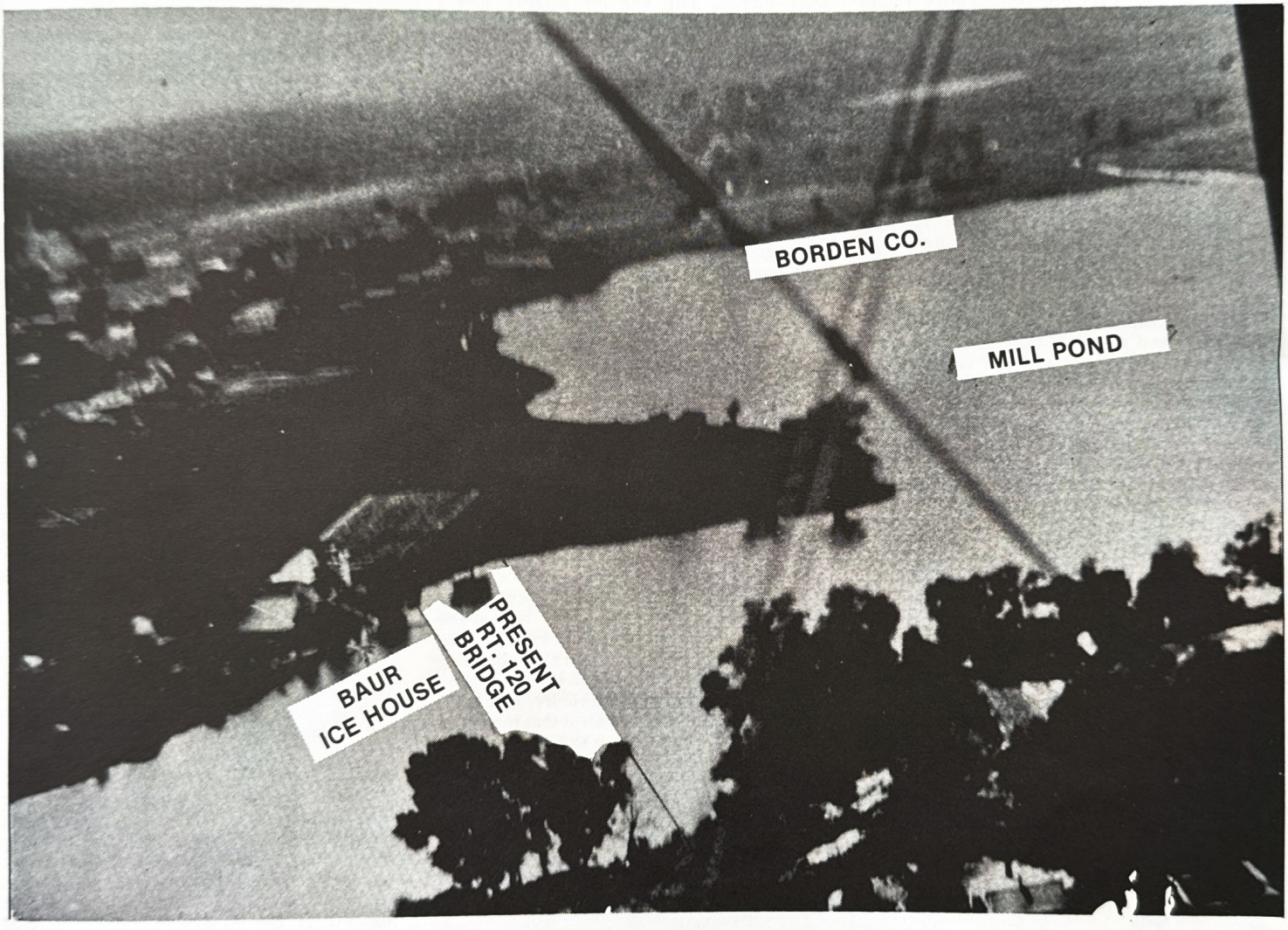
(Do you remember rationing?) Yeah, we did all during the war. I remember I was the City Clerk then. I remember the Board of Supervisors for the County. They drove around the county, to bring supplies to all the clerks. If you wanted sugar or tires or gas, anything like that, you had to fill out these blanks, take them to Woodstock. Of course, it took four of them to go around and deliver those blanks. When they left, I remember, I wouldn't have any work they said, just hand out the forms. Well, that was a lot of bologna! A lot of these women, especially the older ones, wanted to get some sugar for canning. They'd send it in and they were too honest and they didn't get any sugar. Then I'd have to reapply for them. The tires, gas, all those things, they had to get the stamps out of Woodstock. I had these supplies. I would keep them piled up and go to Woodstock once a week — take these applications over there and sometimes had to plead for people. There were people up around the Bay that wanted to keep their homes warm all winter while living in Chicago — well, they asked me about those and I couldn't approve of those kind, but I remember one old woman, she was alone. They had put in an oil furnace and they turned her down and I had to put up a fight for her and got it. Had to fight for a lot of people. When it was over, my tires were worn out. So I applied for some myself and they turned me down! I made one more trip to Woodstock. I told them a few things about those years that I put in filling out those forms and driving over there with them and I got tires, 4 new ones.

(Did McHenry lose a lot of young men during the war?) Quite a few. We used to have a bulletin board there, had the names on nameplates. I don't know whatever happened to it. But we had quite a few of them that were lost. Of course, we had a list of all those who were in service, too. And there was a long list of people in service.

(How about the fifties?) Things were going along pretty good by then. A lot of building. Then in the sixties things were going quite well, a boom — a lot of building. The city started annexing property. They annexed Lakeland Park at that time. There was a lot of criticism about that. They thought they shouldn't have done it, but it upgraded them into a pretty nice subdivision today. Along came groups that thought McHenry had to be bigger. Well, big isn't always best. But they expanded until we got pretty big. I think we're going to be joined up with Crystal Lake one of these years. Driving down Crystal Lake Road, why I remember my wife telling me one time we're going to be joining up with Crystal Lake, and I said you'll never see that day! Danged if she will! You drive down that road and see all the way down is built up now. It could happen!

(Did you ever think of moving some other place besides McHenry?) No, I had roots here — didn't want to live anyplace else. Although, when it got to about 10,000 people, I kind of longed for the old days in a small town when you could go down the street and speak to everybody.

I think I've been kind of long-winded; but when it's all over, there'll be things I'll think about that could have been recorded. But I think this will suffice. Thank you.



This aerial photo was taken in 1926, when the Mill Pond was a large body of water. It shows the Borden Milk Factory, the Baur Ice House, and the present location of the Route 120 Bridge (for reference).

Patrons

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The Serritella Family

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The Snells - Gary, Tricia and Vanessa

Alderman Michael Teta & Mrs. Stephanie Teta

Police Chief Patrick Joyce & Mrs. Annette Joyce

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In Loving Memory of Mercedes J. Senn-Cadotte, Jeff & Lindah Senn-Cadotte, parents and Mr. & Mrs. George H. Cadotte, grandparents

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carey

Chain-O-Lakes Travel Service, Inc.

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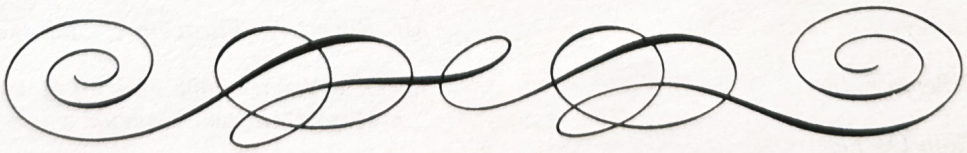
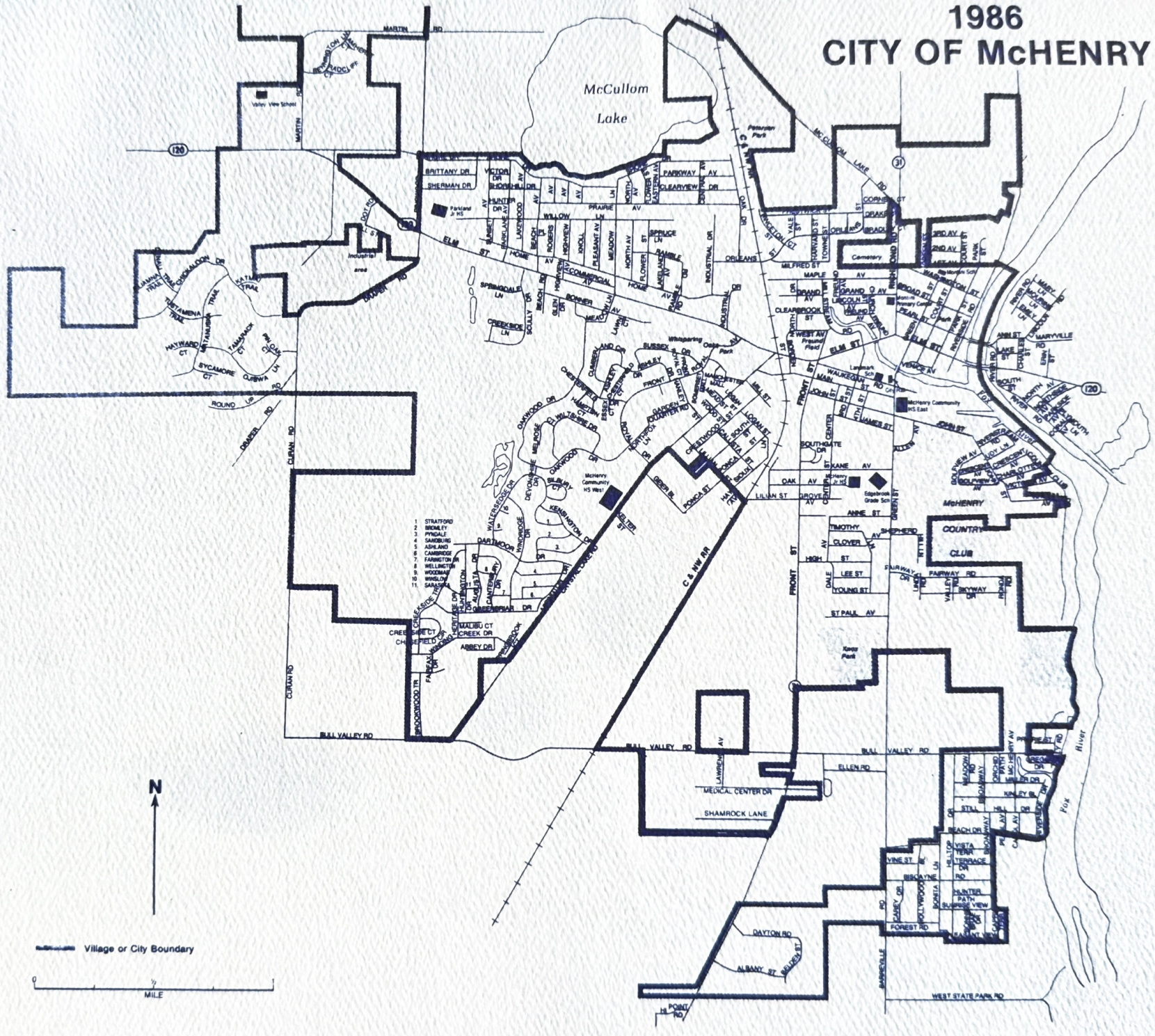
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